

DOCUMENTATION ON TRADITIONAL FESTIVAL WEAR OF CONSERVATIVE SOCIETIES OF NORTHERN KARNATAKA

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ABSTRACT

India is recognized globally for its deep-rooted culture with diversity. Each community articulates the rich heritage, civilization, habitat, beliefs and unique costume. In India even today nomads and some conservative societies dwell in remote areas, cut off from main city. Among such communities Goulis, Halakkis, Kunbis Lambanis and Siddis are identified for stunningly traditional costume. The present investigation focused on traditional costumes worn during the celebration of fairs, festivals and rituals by conservative societies of Karnataka. The costumes of each conservative society differ in their traditional costumes. The results reveal that 1st and 2nd generation men and women, irrespective of the conservative societies wear traditional costumes, whereas, a shift towards the modern costumes can be observed among younger boys and girls of all the conservative societies.

KEYWORDS: *Conservative Societies, Traditional Costumes, Fairs, Festivals and Rituals*

INTRODUCTION

The conservative societies (tribes) population is identified as the aboriginal inhabitants of our country and seen in almost every state of India. For centuries the conservative societies have been living very simple lives based on the natural environment and have developed cultural patterns congenial to their physical and social environment. As the name implies, conservative societies (tribes) are 'Adivasi' or original dwellers, living in the subcontinent from unrecorded time and possibly driven into the forests by more aggressive settlers - Aryans being the earliest ones to socially subjugate them. In order to resist complete domination, conservative societies evolved their distinct identity through life style, endogamy, occupation, spirituality, their festivals, rituals, customs and beliefs, cropping pattern, hunting, food gathering as well as ethnic costumes, jewellery, accessories, head gear, and footwear. Above all, their intense personal relationship with the jungle around them, built perfectly balanced rhythms which can best be described as symbiotic (Varghese, 2010).

The present study paying attention on the conservative societies of *Goulis, Halakkis, Kunbis, Lambanis* and *Siddis* of Dharwad, Haveri and Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka state in south India. These groups have unique historical past as most of them are migrants. This study aims to explore and document the traditional costumes worn during fairs, festivals, and rituals of conservative societies, the traditional textiles and costume of each conservative societies of the region, strengthens communal solidarity and beliefs. The tribal costume has its own charm with its traditional textiles which shine in their highest glory of beauty. Gradually due to competition and rapid development, metamorphosis of the tribal social setup, handicrafts of the tribes has lost much of its market, and is almost non-existent and reached the verge of extinction in the name of change. Preoccupied with the survival of the study was to touch upon the futuristic vision of the

traditional textiles, their status and strength of survival. In this view, the specific objectives were to study the distinctive features of the traditional textiles in terms of yarns used, looms, colour, motifs and their symbolism and to document the traditional costume of men and women worn for different occasions.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was undertaken during the year 2011-2014 in Dharwad, Haveri and Uttara Kannada districts of Karnataka. The respondents in this study are drawn from five different conservative society's viz., *Goulis*, *Halakkis*, *Kunbis*, *Lambanis* and *Siddis*. A total of 250 conservative (tribal) families, 50 families from each conservative societies were selected following randomly sampling method. However, two villages from each Taluk of Dharwad, Haveri and Uttara Kannada district were selected through lottery method.

The major part of data was collected from the heads of the family, elderly and experienced members of conservative societies, The data was collected through personal visit to the families in order to get the first hand information with respect to the listed objectives. *Panchayat* members of the villages, Community *Nayakas* and *Panchayat* Development Officers were interviewed in group to elicit the pertinent data regarding the number of households, population, origin, fairs and festivals. The primary data was successfully collected through interview, observation and photographic methods. Each conservative society has its own record of celebrating various fairs and festivals. Number of festivals celebrated by all the societies is different. Under this heading the documentation encompasses on month of celebration, costume worn, involvement of family members and their significances during celebration of fairs and festivals. There are various rituals carried out at every stage of life from birth till death of an individual. These rituals vary for boys and girls, and some are common for both. The procedure and custom followed in performing each ritual differ from one society to another; thus the detail about functions and rituals is recorded under this heading.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Traditional Costumes Worn During the Celebration of Common Festivals by Conservative Societies

Karnataka fairs and festivals have a lot importance in the daily pattern of the Karnataka conservative societies. In fact, the Karnataka fairs and festival form an integral part of the lifestyle of the people of conservative societies. Some of the vital fairs and festivals of conservative societies are commonly celebrated by all the conservative societies and some are traditional celebrated by each conservative society, which are unique with a less or no resemblance among each other. The festival mood is always in the air of conservative societies. These festivals are filled with charm, grace and significance that can be witnessed visually among conservative societies. The vibes that have been created by the fairs and festivals of conservative societies have been successful in depicting the religious and cultural aspects of the Karnataka state. Costumes play an important role in the fairs and festivals among conservative societies.

Gathering opinion from conservative societies on the concept of commonly celebrated festivals, it was found that some of the festivals celebrated by the people of Karnataka are also being celebrated by these conservative societies other than their traditional festivals. The festivals viz., *Sankranti*, *Shivaratri*, *Holi*, *Ugadi*, *Nagar panchami*, *Ganesh* festival, *Dasara* and *Deepawali* are celebrated in the month of January, February, March, April, August, September, October and November respectively, (Table 1).

These festivals are celebrated since 16th century by *Knubis* and *Siddis*, 17th century by *Halakkis* and 19th century by *Goulis* and *Lambanis*. The entire family of each conservative societies involved in celebrating these festivals. However *Holi* festival among *Goulis*, *Halakkis* and *Kunbis* is celebrated by only men, young boys and girls, women are not a part of *Holi* celebration. The *Gouli* and *Halakki* women along with young girls celebrate *Nagar Panchami* and *Kunbi* women folk celebrate *Deepawali*.

The traditional costumes worn by men and women of conservative societies during the festivals varied from one another, in fact the societies are very particular about the colours of their traditional costumes. The younger generation of all the five conservative societies irrespective of their gender has shifted over to modern costumes as that of urban societies, to indicate one among them. All the festivals have mythological, social, cultural, spiritual and psychological significance like worshiping of deity and ancestors to protect and safe guard them, to preserve their culture, to collect together and inherited the culture to next generation, to solve the disputes and enjoy the festivals. Each festival has its own procedure to be followed but varied from one another conservative societies. These festival brings them together and resolve conflicts in the communities.

Traditional Costumes Worn During the Celebration of Traditional Festivals by Conservative Societies

The entire community of *Goulis* is collectively involved in celebrating *Gouri Habba*, *Dasara* and *Govu hunnime* in the months of September, October and November respectively; during these festivals the *Goulis* worship deity and cattle. On the other hand young boys and girls along with elderly men in the family involved in celebration of *Sigma* in February. During these festivals men and women are seen in their traditional costumes *i.e.*, men in shirt, half pant and white turban and women in 9 yard sari draped in *Kachi* with simple blouse. The traditional colours of saree are nature green and turmeric yellow.

Halakkis of Uttara Kannada are found to have been celebrating their traditional festivals since 17th century. *Hari dina habba* is celebrated when a person belonging to *Halakki* man comes back home after worshiping Lord *Venkateshwar* at *Tirupati*, *Gaddi habba* is celebrated during October and November to worship paddy crop, the pack of cattle is worshiped in November and it is called *Govu habba*, *Huli habba* is celebrated on a convenient day suitable for the entire community in a forest and *Hannu habba* is celebrated in the name of their ancestors in the month of May. All the above four festivals where the entire community is involved. *Suggi* festival is celebrated for a weeks' time before the festival of *Holi* in the month of March, where only men, young boys and girls are involved. *Tulsi pooja* is the only traditional festival celebrated by *Halakki* women and girls in the month of November, when Goddess *Tulsi* is worshiped and prayed for the safety and security of their husband and family. The traditional costume worn by *Halakki* men and women during these festivals is *Langoti* by men and saree (*Band*) without choli. The dominant colours of sarees are found to be green, red, dark pink, blue, purple and yellow.

The *Kunbis* have settled in Uttara Kannada since 16th Century, and the traditional festivals celebrated by *Kunbis* are *Hiriyaru habba* either in the month of May or June celebrated to worship their ancestors to get protection from evil spirits; *Huli habba* is celebrated according to the connivance of the entire community where the tiger is worshiped to protect their families and domestic animals. *Sigma* festival is celebrated during March by men, young boys and girls and *Tulsi pooja* is performed by women and girls. The traditional costume worn by *Kunbi* men are shirt and half pant, whereas women in saree, however women do not use blouse. The traditional colours of the saree are green, blue, red and purple.

The *Lambani* conservative societies of Haveri and Dharwad district celebrate *Seetala (Koli hubba)* in the month of August since 19th Century. Where the entire community of *Lambani* celebrate in their respective *Tanda* and villages. This conservative society worships their Deity to protect their *Tanda* from diseases and disorders. The traditional costume worn by men is composed of Dhoti, Kurta and Turban and women used Ghagra, Choli and Chunni respectively. The traditional colours of women costume is red, maroon and black.

Hiriyaru habba is celebrated in the months of April and November, the only traditional festival celebrated by *Siddis* since 16th Century. The entire community gets together and worships their ancestors; pray them to be with them forever to safeguard their families and community. The traditional costume worn by men was Langoti and bodice and skirt by women. However, their traditional colour is black. Presently *siddis* have left behind their traditional costume but are seen wearing modern costumes, (Table 2).

Irrespective of the conservative societies they preferred to wear some of the modern costumes during their traditional festivals. Young boys wear shirt, kurta, half pant, trousers and jeans whereas young girls appear in Indian saree, salwar-kameez, skirt-top, frock and jeans-top.

Traditional Costumes Worn During the Celebration of Functions and Rituals Performed by Conservative Societies

There is no country or community wherein customs are not found, customs play an important part in personality building from birth to death man is under the influence of customs. If customs is taken as the repository of our social heritage the let us discuss the heritage of the conservative societies. In order to know this social heritage, let us take up the cycle rituals of conservative societies. A life cycle ritual starts with birth of a child and end with death of a person. An attempt is made here to illustrate the rituals in Table 3.

All the conservative societies have their own way of performing the rituals for both the genders. But only *Siddis* do not have any evidence of their ancestral rituals instead they perform the rituals by imitating the other communities surrounding them. However, irrespective of the conservative societies do not perform any ritual at the birth of a child. Naming ceremony is performed by *Goulis*, *Halakkis* and *Kunbis* after 13th day of birth wherein *Lambani* perform after 1 month. Javala (hair cutting) is performed at 5th, 7th, 11th and 9th month after birth by *Goulis*, *Halakkis*, *Kunbis* and *Lambanis* respectively. *Goulis*, *Halakkis* and *Lambanis* perform thread ceremony at 5th month of birth whereas; *Kunbis* perform after 3rd month of birth this ritual is done only for a baby boy. The ritual performed on girl attaining puberty may be between 12-16 years of age, *kunbis* do not perform any ritual on attaining puberty. Engagement and marriage is performed after 18 years of age for both boys and girls. Sheemant (pregnancy) ritual is celebrated at 8th month by *Gouli* and *Halakki* and 7th month among *Lambani*, whereas *Kunbi* do not perform this ceremony. Death ceremony is performed after 9th day among *Goulis*, 11th day by *Halakkis*, after 1 year by *Kunbis* and after 13th day by *Lambani* irrespective of their gender. Almost all the rituals are celebrated by involving the entire family and community among conservative societies. Earlier they use to wear their traditional costume but now in the 21st century a shift towards modern outfits can be observed among conservative societies. There is no restriction to the usage of any colour with respect to modern costume.

Though the conservative societies belong to Hindu, their customs, traditional in performing a particular ritual differs. Even on migrating to the unknown region they have retained their traditional way of celebration the rituals, the rituals may be same but differs in the procedure to be followed. Irrespective of the conservative societies perform all the rituals mentioned in Table 20 whereas, *Kunbi* do not celebrate any ritual on a girl attaining puberty and sheemant

(pregnancy) ceremony because they do not have any kind of pollution attached to it and most of the time it is kept as secret from the society. The rituals are the means to retain the social heritage and social contact which keeps an emotional bonding attached with the friends and relatives. Except *Lambani* all other conservative societies adapted the modern costumes like Indian saree, salwar-kameez, chudidar and skirt-top for girls and shirt, kurta with half pant, trousers and jeans for boys of any colour whereas, *Lambanis* still perform some of the rituals like marriage and sheement in their traditional costumes.

CONCLUSIONS

The fairs and festivals are performed by wearing the traditional costumes. The common festivals celebrated by Hindus are also celebrated by conservative societies whereas, the differences can be observed in the traditional fairs festivals celebration. This difference is due to the reasons like origin of conservative societies, original place, presently dwelling area, Month and frequency of celebration by the community.

Gouli men of 1st generation wear shirt or kurta with half pant and turban, *Halakki and Siddi* men wear *langoti*, *Kunbi* men are seen in shirt with half pant and *Lambani* men wear dhoti with kurta and turban. On other hand men belongs to 2nd generation of *Gouli* wear shirt kurta with half pant and turban, *Halakkis* wear shirt with trousers, *Kunbi* wear shirt with half pant or trousers, *Lambani* and *Siddi* men wear shirt with half pant, formal trousers or jeans. In contrast to 1st and 2nd generation, the men of 3rd generation irrespective of conservative society wear shirt with half pant, formal trousers and jeans.

The women belonging to the 1st generation of *Gouli* wear kachi style saree (*Band*) with blouse, *Halakkis* and *Kunbis* wear saree (*Band*) without blouse, *Lambanis* wear ghagra, choli and chunni and *Siddis* wear Indian style saree but the traditional costume of the society is knee length skirt and bodice. On the other hand the 2nd generation women folk of *Gouli* and *Halakki* have retained the traditionality and wear traditional costume. Meanwhile *Kunbis* have adopted Indian style saree with blouse. The *Lambanis* do wear their traditional costume and sometimes Indian style saree too. *Siddi* women drape saree in Indian style, salwar-kameez and chudidar. In contrast to the 1st and 2nd generations, the women of 3rd generation, irrespective of conservative societies wear Indian saree, salwar-kameez, langa-choli, half saree, chudidar, skirt-top, and jeans-top.

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Table 1: Traditional Costumes Worn During the Celebration of Common Festivals By Conservative Societies

Sl. No.	Name of the Festival	Month of Celebration	Celebration of Festival Since (Year)	Involvement of Family Member	Traditional Costume	Colour	Modern Costume	Significance
I Gouli								
1	Sankranti	January	19 th Century	Entire family	Men – Shirt, half pant and turban Women – Kachi style saree (Band) with blouse	Green and yellow	Men - Shirt and half pant or Trousers Women – Indian style saree and salwar-kameez, skirt-topper and frock	Worshipping of Deity, joy and happiness
2	Shivaratri	February		Entire family				
3	Holi	March		Men, young boys and girls				
4	Ugadi (Gudi padav)	April		Entire family				
5	Nagar panchami	August		Women and girls				
6	Deepawali	November		Entire family				
7	Ganesh festival			Do not celebrate				
II Halakki								
1	Sankranti	January	17 th Century	Entire family	Men – Langoti Women – Saree (Band) without blouse	Green, red, dark pink, blue, purple and yellow	Men - Shirt and trousers Women –Indian style saree and salwar-kameez	Worshipping of Deity to get his graces
2	Shivaratri	February		Entire family				
3	Holi	March		Men, young boys and girls				
4	Ugadi (Gudi padav)	April		Entire family				
5	Nagarpanchami	August		Women and girls				
6	Ganesh festival	September		Entire family				
7	Dasara	October		Entire family				
8	Deepawali	November		Entire family				
III Kunbi								
1	Sankranti	January	16 th Century	Entire family	Men – Shirt and half pant Women – Saree (Band) without blouse	Green, red, blue, yellow and purple	Men - Shirt and half pant or trousers Women –Indian style saree, langa-choli, and salwar-kameez	Worshipping of Deity for the safety and security of life
2	Shivaratri	February		Entire family				
3	Holi	March		Men, young boys and girls				
4	Ugadi (Gudi padav)	April		Entire family				
5	Nagarpanchami	August		Entire family				
6	Ganesh festival	September		Entire family				
7	Dasara	October		Entire family				
8	Deepawali	November		Entire family				

Table 1: Contd.,

IV		Lambani							
1	Sankranti	January	19 th Century	Entire family	Men – Dhoti, kurta and turban Women – Ghagra, choli and chunni	Red, maroon and black	Men – Shirt and formal trousers or jeans Women –Indian style saree, salwar-kameez, chudidar, skirt-top and jeans-top	Worship of Deity	
2	Shivaratri	February							
3	Holi	March							
4	Ugadi (Gudi padav)	April							
5	Nagarpanchami	August							
6	Ganesh festival	September							
7	Dasara	October							
8	Deepawali	November							
V		Siddi							
1	Sankranti	January	16 th Century	Entire family	Men – Langoti Women – Bodice with skirt	Black	Men - Shirt and half pant or formal trousers or jeans Women –Indian style Saree, salwar-kameez, langa-choli, chudidar, skirt-top and jeans-top	Worship of ancestors	
2	Shivaratri	February							
3	Holi	March							
4	Ugadi (Gudi padav)	April							
5	Nagarpanchami	August							
6	Ganesh festival	September							
7	Dasara	October							
8	Deepawali	November							

Table 2: Traditional Costumes Worn During the Celebration of Traditional Festivals by Conservative Societies

Sl. No.	Name of the Festival	Month of Celebration	Celebration of Festival Since (Year)	Involvement of Family Member	Traditional Costume	Colour	Modern Costume	Significance
I								
Gouli								
1	Sigma	March	19 th Century	Men, young boys and girls	Men – Shirt and half pant and turban Women – Kachi style saree (Band) with blouse	Green and yellow	Men - Shirt and half pant or Trousers Women – Indian style saree and salwar-kameez, skirt-topper and frock	Worship of Deity
2	Gouri festival	September		Entire family				
3	Dasara	October		Entire community				
4	Gouri hunnime	November		Women and girls				
5	Govu habba	November		Entire community				
II								
Halakki								
1	Suggi	March	17 th Century	Men, young boys and girls	Men – Langoti Women – Saree (Band) without blouse	Green, red, dark pink, blue, purple and yellow	Men - Shirt and trousers Women –Indian style saree and salwar-kameez	Worship of Deity and ancestors Worship of paddy crop Women worship Goddess Tulsi to keep their husband safety and life security Worshipping cattle Worshipping tiger, pray to safeguard their domestic animals Worship of ancestor
2	Hari dina	--		Entire community				
3	Gaddi habba (Harvesting festival)	October - November		Entire community				
4	Tulsi pooja	November		Women and girls				
5	Govu habba	November		Entire community				
6	Huli habba	--		Entire community				
7	Hannu habba	May		Entire community				
III								
Kuubi								
1	Sigma	March	16 th Century	Men, young boys and girls	Men – Shirt and half pant Women – Saree (Band) without blouse	Green, red, blue, yellow and purple	Men - Shirt and half pant or trousers Women –Indian style saree, langa-choli, and salwar-kameez	Worship of Deity to protect their families and community from evil sprit Worship of tiger to safeguard their domestic animals
2	Tulsi pooja	November		Women and girls				
3	Harriyaru habba (ancestor)	May / June		Entire community				
4	Huli habba	--		Entire community				
IV								
Lambani								
1	Seetala (koli habba)	August	19 th Century	Entire community	Men – Dhoti, kurta and turban Women – Ghagra, choli and chunni	Red, maroon and black	Men - Shirt and half pant or formal trousers and jeans Women –Indian style saree, salwar-kameez, chudidar, skirt-top and jeans-top	Worship of God asking to protect their Tanda from diseases and disorders
V								
Siddi								
1	Hiriyaru habba (ancestor)	April and November	16 th Century	Entire community	Men – Langoti Women – Bodice with skirt	Black	Men - Shirt and half pant or formal trousers and jeans Women –Indian style saree, salwar-kameez, langa-choli, chudidar, skirt-top and jeans-top	Worship of ancestor and ask them to stay along and safeguard their community

Table 3: Traditional Costumes Worn During the Celebration of Functions and Rituals Performed by Conservative Societies

Sl. No.	Name of the Rituals	Time of celebration	Gender (Boy/Girl)	Involvement of Family Member	Costume- Modern Attire	Colour
I Gouli						
1	At birth	--	--	Entire family	Girl- Indian saree with blouse and Salwar-Kameez Boy- Shirt, kurta with half pant or formal trousers and jeans	All colours
2	Naming ceremony	13 th day after birth	Both			
3	Javala (hair cutting) ceremony	5 th month after birth	Both			
4	Thread ceremony	5 th month	Boy			
5	Function of menarche	12 to 16 years	Girl			
6	Engagement and Marriage	After 18 years	Both			
7	Sheemant (Pregnancy) function	8 th month	Girl			
8	Death ceremony	9 days	Both			
II Halakki						
1	At birth	--	Both	Entire family	Girl- Indian saree with blouse and Salwar-Kameez Boy- Shirt, kurta with half pant or formal trousers and jeans	All colours
2	Naming ceremony	13 th day after birth	Both			
3	Javala (hair cutting) ceremony	7 th month after birth	Both			
4	Thread ceremony	5 th month after birth	Boy			
5	Function of menarche	12 to 16 years	Girl			
6	Engagement and Marriage	After 20 years	Both			
7	Sheemant (Pregnancy) function	8 th month	Girl			
8	Death ceremony	11 days after death	Both			
III Kunbi						
1	At birth	--	Both	Entire family	Girl- Indian saree with blouse, Langa-Choli and Salwar-Kameez Boy- Shirt, kurta with half pant or formal trousers and jeans	All colours
2	Naming ceremony	13 th day after birth	Both			
3	Javala (hair cutting) ceremony	11 th month after birth	Both			
4	Thread ceremony	3 rd month	Boy			
5	Function of menarche	--	Girl			
6	Engagement and Marriage	After 18 years	Both			
7	Sheemant (Pregnancy) function	--	Girl			
8	Death ceremony	1 year after death	Both			
IV Lambani						
1	At birth	--	Both	Entire family	Girl- Ghagra, choli and chunni, Indian saree with blouse, Chudidar, Skirt-Top, Jeans-Top and Salwar-Kameez Boy- Shirt, kurta with half pant or formal trousers and jeans	All colours
2	Naming ceremony	1 month after birth	Both			
3	Javala (hair cutting) ceremony	9 th month	Both			
4	Thread ceremony	5 th month	Boy			
5	Function of menarche	12 – 16 years	Girl			
6	Engagement and Marriage	18 years				
7	Sheemant (Pregnancy) function	7 th month	Girl			
8	Death ceremony	13 th day	Both			