

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

Globalization and Changing Culture of Tribal Living in Korang Village, East Siang District, Arunachal Pradesh, India

Dr. Anga Padu

Assistant Professor, Department of Education,
Rajiv Gandhi University, Rono Hills, Doimukh, Arunachal Pradesh, India

Abstract:

Arunachal Pradesh, a tribal state inhabited by 26 major tribes and 110 sub-tribes scattered in 21 districts has underwent many transformation in the past few decades. Unlike some of the advanced parts of the country, where the contemporary forces of change such as liberalization, privatization, industrialization and globalization besides the consistent forces i.e. inventions and discoveries can be held responsible equally to a great extent for bringing socio-cultural, political, economic, agricultural and other changes in the society. Changes in tribal communities of Arunachal Pradesh in general and Korang village in particular have seen boosted by extension of globalization significantly more than any other forces. The state till date may be considered as terra-incognita in respect to other forces of change. Therefore, present paper is a maiden attempt by the investigator to outline the cultural changes as witnessed among tribal living in the study area due to globalization. All the aspects of tribal communities in the village where changes are proliferating are very comprehensive and complex enough to be discussed in an attempt. Thus, only cultural aspect of tribal communities in the study area has been chosen for discourse. Based on the generalization, recommendations have been made.

Keywords: Korang, tribal, globalization, cultural change

1. Introduction

Arunachal Pradesh, the 24th state of the country is situated at the north easternmost corner of India with 68.79% scheduled tribes (2011 Census Report) is a tribal state inhabited by 26 major tribes and 110 sub-tribes spread over 21 districts. All tribes are believed to be derived from a common stock having their lineage and antecedent with Tibetan and Burmese Mongoloid race. But in the process of migration different groups moved to different direction and evolved a distinct culture of own, adapted to ecosystem of the place.

With passage of time, every society goes through a process of change. In fact, change is a permanent characteristic of every society. It is the law of nature. Earlier change was mostly marked by inventions and discoveries but in contemporary society besides these two factors various other social processes like industrialization, privatization, liberalization and globalization seems playing vital role in contributing changes in the society globally. Hence, these social processes are now considered as major forces of changes in the modern time. Tribal communities which significantly differ from the mainstream Indian, in the past few decades have also seen largely affected and affecting by these forces. Therefore, present paper is an attempt to portray how globalization as one of the dominant forces of change in modern time has brought changes in the culture of tribal living in Korang village of East Siang district in Arunachal Pradesh. Korang is a village which comes under Korang circle of East Siang district, Arunachal Pradesh. The village is settled on hill surrounded by four villages, namely Mane, Lipin, Sido and Ledum. The village is inhabited by two major tribes i.e. galo and adi. Over the years, numerous changes have been witnessed in the study area. Study reveals that, those changes are multi-faceted ranging from social, economic, cultural, education, agriculture, political spheres, etc. But only changes geared by globalization on cultural aspect has been considered for discourse intentionally because all the factors and spheres of changes is quite wide and difficult enough to be discussed in an attempt.

2. Objective

To investigate the impacts of globalization on culture of tribal living in Korang village of East Siang District, Arunachal Pradesh, India.

3. Method

The existing total twenty-seven (27) households in the village were surveyed. On the basis of data collected from every household, a generalization was made regarding the cultural changes due to globalization. Beside keen observation was made both on changes in socio-cultural and physical entities. It is worthy to mention here that to depict the cultural changes the investigator remained stick to the words spoken and used by galo tribe largely. As the investigator belongs to galo tribe, it was more convenient for her. For analysis purpose, only percentage is used as statistical tool.

4. Globalization and Changing Culture

To portray the changing culture of tribal of Korang village, Nordskog's definition of culture has been considered. According to him "Culture includes both material and non-material elements, all of which are products of human society." Thus, in the present paper cultural change stands for change in material elements (for instance house, dresses, household stuff etc.) and non-material elements (for instance knowledge, beliefs, customs, skills etc.) those are available to the tribal people as members of Korang village. Personal interview taken to the 27 representative samples showed how extension of globalization within this tribal village has resulted change in their taste, perception, thought, daily life style, cuisine, dresses, festivals, family type, house type, indigenous knowledge, etc. which are as follows:

4.1. House

Expanse of globalization has extensively changed the house construction of Kora village. The tribal people who earlier stayed in self-constructed typical traditional houses (*namvv*) made by bamboo, wood, cane and toko leaves or "*tavvk*" (a big palm leaf) obtained from forest are now- a- days staying in changed form of houses. It is observed that only 33.33% houses in the village are in pristine form whereas 66.66% houses are in modernized forms (SP Type = 3.70%, RCC = 29.62% and Semi – Pakka = 33.33%) with traditional form of kitchen. A compulsory exclusive tradition of ritual called "*roksin kognam*" (chicken liver examination) or "*p'wp chinam*" (egg yolk examination) that was conducted previously by owner of the house before laying out the plan of house in a new plot by engaging a priest to examine the auspiciousness of the plot and after the completion of construction of the house a ritual called as "*namli yubnam*", in which in place of the owner of the house a group of young boys and girls spend the first night in the newly constructed house with some elders to do the finishing work, enjoying the night with served drink, meat and food by the owner is now almost relaxed.

4.2. Occupation

Agriculture in the form of "*Moodi Rwk*" or "*tump rwk*" (Jhum cultivation/shifting cultivation) meant for rice, maize, millet, cucumber, chili, pineapple, etc. cultivation and "*isi rwk*" (wet rice cultivation) was once the main sources of livelihood for people in the village is now losing its status gradually. In general, jhuming is practiced in three forms such as "*pvllyk*", "*docho*" and "*rwgnv*". The word "*pvllyk*" is the combination of two words "*tpv*" (maize) and "*allek*" (full of). Thus "*pvllyk*" means a field exclusively meant for growing maize. Usually it is small in size and cleared well in advance so that the maize can be eaten during the cultivation of the main field. Much care is not given and field is abandoned just after the harvesting of the maize. The term "*docho*" is a combination of two words "*donam*" (to eat) and "*aacho*" (to come first). Thus, it is the field for rising of crops for the first consumption. The size of "*docho*" is bit larger than that of "*pvllyk*". Here both maize as well as rice is cultivated. A few other crops such as millet, pumpkin, cucumber etc. are also grown. This is meant for consumption during the cultivation of the main field, the "*rwgne*". "*rvgnv*" the word which means the main field has also derived from combining the two words i.e. "*rwk*" (field) and "*anv*" (mother or main). So *rwgnv* means mother field or the main field. Sometime, the same field is cultivated for more than one year which is called "*rwga*". All the agriculture ritual is performed during the cultivation of the main field. Although majority of people (77.77% households) till today involved in agriculture but it was told that 66.66% households in the village do have at least one or two members employed in central and state government offices. 14.81% households have members running grocery shops and eateries. Thus, besides agriculture, the tribal people who earlier largely depended on agriculture for their livelihood are now - a - days substantially supported and sustained by government job and retailing. The educational status of the village has also changed remarkably over the years since the advent of formal education in the village just around five decades ago. The village once filled with maximum illiterate people now projects a very dazzling picture, presently in the village among tribal 8.66% are X passed, 16.24% are XII passed, 15.16% are graduates and 2.88% are post-graduates. These figures itself depict the growing awareness and changing attitude of tribal people towards formal education which is undoubtedly an impact of globalization.

4.3. Traditional Attire and Ornaments

The dressing preference of tribal people has also been seen affected a lot by the wings of globalization (mostly through mass media). Modern dresses like jeans, t-shirts, skirts, Salwar Kamiz, Gown, frok, etc. are replacing the traditional attire of tribal people; women wear such as "*galv*" (open skirt), "*koorv*" (a white skirt with black strips and black blouse), "*bvka*" (a black skirt with black blouse), "*onyop*" (a number of brass discs wore by small girl on their waist to cover their private parts), also used by some grown up women till the first child and men wear like "*galuk*" or "*tango*" (a sleeveless woven shirt) and "*sabv*" (a loin to cover the lower private part). Further, even the traditional tribal ornaments like "*tadok*", "*koji*", "*kopv*", "*lvmvn*", "*raaji*" (beads and heavy metal wristlets, anklets, earrings and waistband, etc.) are seen replaced by gold and silver. It is revealed that only 0.72% (mostly the old generation) always wear their traditional attire and ornaments, 34.29% people wear frequently, 19.49% people occasionally during festival, special occasion or if needed, 18.05% people (mostly new generation) rarely wear their traditional dresses and ornaments. It was revealed that increasing use of modern dresses and ornaments has resulted in the development of ignorance among them towards their own traditional dresses and ornaments and due to the very same reason the value of traditional attires and ornaments are becoming very high, assigning them the status of antique items. Moreover, the way earlier, tribal (old generation) possessed very vast and thorough knowledge about their different traditional items is now seen substantially diminished (mostly among present generation and gen next).

4.4. Marriage

Marriage ceremony of tribal in the village is a very long step by step and expensive process. If a man or his parent finds a suitable match for him, a marriage proposal is taken from the boy's side to the girl's parent with *opo*, meat and *javra* (local shawl) by the middleman/middlemen deployed by boy's parent. This first phase of marriage ceremony is called "*tagak*". If the girl's parent accepts the items, the proposal is considered accepted. After *tagak*, on a fixed auspicious day the recognition of girl as a daughter-in-law by the boy's parent is carried out. During which a ritual is performed by the shaman (*nyibo*) called "*laayap*" or "*agam layap*". A feast is organized during the ceremony for the guests invited to give blessing to the boy and the girl. This ceremony is further followed by "*nyida*" (the main marriage ceremony.) on a fixed auspicious day mutually decided by both the parties. During *nyida* several long rituals like sacrifice of Mithun, various giving and taking ceremony, cultural programme and many more are performed depending on the affordability of both the sides. Serving of meat, local beer and rice is a compulsory item during *nyida*. During field visit all the respondents (27) stated that many changes has seen in their marriage ceremony now-a-days due to inter-tribe, inter-religious marriages and many other factors mostly geared by globalization. Specially, *nyida* (the main marriage ceremony) is now hardly seen observing among the tribal largely due to lack of financial feasibility caused by the habit of consumerism as ignited by globalization process. Now most of the tribal are limiting themselves only to *tagak* and *laayap* ceremonies which have also become very costly affair now-a-days for laymen. In case of love marriage some couples without going through any marriage ritual, straightly go for living together and start family life.

4.5. Family type

Growing consumerism, individualism and preference for high standard of living more or less caused by globalization has changed the attitude of tribal people towards family type. Till today though majority of households (62.96%) are practicing their ancestral family system i.e. joint living but gradual change in family system i.e. from ancestral family system (Joint family) to modern family system (nuclear family) has already made headway among them. The study showed that 37.03% households in the village are living as nuclear family. Patriarchal form of society exists in the village. Regarding family norms father is consider as the head of the house, his opinion, suggestion or view is of supreme importance for any serious matter in the family but mother also receive equal love and respect in the family. The financial responsibility of the family is considered as an important duty of the father but in some family's mothers have found replaced the role.

4.6. Festival

Festivals occupy a very important place in the lives of tribal people. There are many festivals celebrated by the tribal every year in the village. Out of all festival "*moopin*" (of Galo) and "*solung*" (of Adi) are generally celebrated in a huge manner by the entire villagers unanimously. Use of local beer (*opo*), meat and rice is compulsory items for any festival. All the festivals of tribal are either directly or indirectly connected to cultivation. As reported by all the 27 respondents (100%), several changes have also taken place in the celebration of festivals. For instance, to carry out the rituals in "*moopin*" engaging a priest and sacrifice of animal(s) was a compulsory item followed by some taboos like prohibition from felling tree, from going to field, cutting of soil etc. by the entire villagers and much harder taboos by the person selected to perform animal sacrifice during the "*moopin*". Today all these rituals are relaxed extensively. Many modern elements have been included in the celebration of *moopin*. Hoisting of flag with sketch of *doonyi* (Sun), invitation of political leader or dignitary or some renowned singer or celebrity as chief guest with long speeches becomes part and parcel of the celebration which was never done in the olden days. Today "*moopin*" has become a yearly festival and is celebrated as occasion instead of religious festival. In true sense, it was never celebrated yearly and on fixed date rather after *moopin*, next year "*mari*" was celebrated in the name of *moopin* sacrificing pig in place of *mithun* (Bos Frontalis).

4.7. Modern household stuffs and gadgets

Trend of modernization resulted due to globalization is visible among tribal people by their use of modern household stuffs and gadgets; cooking gas (74.07%), fridge (37.03%), T.V., Radio and Mobile (96.29%), Rice Mill (25.92%), land tiller (11.11%), car (40.74%), bike (81.48%), electric fan (90.78%), individual water pipeline (80%) are being used by the tribal. Besides use of day today household's articles like plastic mug, bucket, steel spoon, wooden shelf, wooden bed, table, chair etc. has become very common among all the houses in the village. It is worthy to mention here that all the houses in the village do access electric supply generated from nearby located Rina Hydro power plant.

4.8. Belief

The tribal in the village are nature worshiper. They consider "*doonyi*" (sun) and "*poolo*" (moon) as the supreme god who judge every action of human beings on the earth by blessing and punishing the people according to their deeds and energize the functioning of the universe. But worshiping is not a daily religious practice among them. Sunshine, rain, wind, etc. are considered as the form of blessing. They considered *doonyi* as female and *poolo* as male. However, it is revealed that process of globalization has invaded the tribal's belief system too. Majority of people i.e. 76.53% are found to be nature worshiper (*Donyi- Poloism*) but at the same time noticeably 21.29% people are found adopted Christianity which brought tremendous positive behavioural changes among tribal people (youths).

4.9. Indigenous knowledge System (IKS) and skills

It is a sad reality that the more tribal people are adapting to modern ways of living the more their indigenous knowledge and skills are eroding day by day. This steady erosion is posing grave dilemma among the gen next and caused them to standstill in hugger-mugger with semi-tribal and semi-modern characteristics for which cultural diffusion; a wings of globalization process may have held more responsible and obvious cause than any other causes. It was found that 25.99% people do not possess indigenous knowledge concerning to their custom and rituals associated with birth, death, marriage, festival, healing, etc. For instance, earlier even for a minor ailment people consulted shaman and accordingly performed ritual to heal the sick member; but now they prefer to consult medical practitioner.

In relation to weaving, an important attribute of tribal society, out of 123 female populations, 47.18% women do not possess the skill of weaving their traditional dresses, stuffs like blanket (*tapum gasor*), bag (*payeek*), etc. and out of 154 male population, it is found that though majority of them i.e. 57.79% possesses skill of making normal/common handicrafts like "*paapey*" (hand-woven basket), "*paapur*" (woven bamboo holder meant for holding raw *opo*), "*chuuka*" (bamboo basket holder), "*koosap*" (Tongs), "*ujuk*" (local water lifter made from guard) etc. it is interesting to learn that greater majority i.e. 90% of them do not possess the skill of making their sophisticated handicrafts i.e. "*raachv*" (local back pack), "*boolup*" (traditional cane hat), "*sobuk*" (sheath), "*opoh*" (flat woven winnowing pan), "*iugin*" (woven basket to carry articles in the back of women), etc. Further, it is also revealed that they are not even interested to learn the skills. This lackadaisical attitude of tribal is spontaneously compelling them to lean heavily on foreign goods, thus, allowing globalization process to proliferate among them.

4.10. Cuisine

The uproar of globalization is also visible in the food habits and cooking of tribal. It was stated that almost all the households, (27) besides their staple food items, i.e. rice and wild vegetables (*oyin, onyor, oyik*, etc.) the tribal communities started consuming dal, roti, bread and various junk food items like magi, wi-wi, mimi, and Chinese cuisine like momo, chow, etc. frequently now-a-days. Even the cooking pattern has switched from boiling to frying as a result of change in the taste. Like others, in tribal society also cooking is generally considered as one of the important responsibility of women but advent of change in the attitude of people has changed the very perception. It is found that 47.15% women do not possess the skill of making important local cuisine i.e. "*wtw*" (rice cake made by grinded rice), "*dopak*" (Ketchup made of meat), "*luktwr*" (dried chili dish) and "*opo*" (local beer made of either rice or millet). Further, "*wtw*" which was earlier made from grinded rice plainly now-a-days has lost its pristine flavor as the same is now made in improvised way, cooked by blending sugar, coconut, raisin, cashew and similar other dried fruits.

4.11. Dialect

The tribal communities in the village do not have written script. They have only spoken dialect called "*adi*" and "*galo*" and for writing purpose they use modified Roman script. The respondents reveal that majority of the tribal people i.e. 86.64% can speak their dialect called "*gomku*" in Galo tribe (commonly spoken by laymen) besides Hindi language, 3.61% (only the very old generation) are found as can speak "*gomku*" as well as "*gomli*" (another form of Galo dialect generally used by only limited group of people which is mostly used for saying proverbs, rhapsody, ritual etc.; an old version which is very tough to speak and understand just like Sanskrit) but do not know any modern language like Hindi, English etc. it is surprising to know that for 7.66% (mostly youth, the gen next) Hindi language is the *lingua-franca*. This fragile importance granted towards their own dialect by the gen next may be because the influence of acculturation brought by globalization changed their attitude resultantly most of them consider Hindi and English speaker superior. Second important cause may be due to growing importance of salaried job for which good formal educational qualification and Hindi/English speaking ability is valued, thus, even the elders of the village do not emphasize the younger to learn their own dialect.

5. Conclusion

Penetration of globalization undoubtedly has led to inclusion of many exotic elements in the culture of tribal life in the Korang village as a result their culture has modified remarkably. These changes can be both negative and positive. For example, if the wide use of Hindi, even as a family language has led to discontinuation of own mother tongue, accessibility of vehicle, cooking gas, etc., have made their life comfortable respectively. However, it is undeniable that the identity of tribal in the village is now very topsy-turvy; neither fully modern nor traditional. If this trend of haphazard changes will continue then the day is not far when they will totally lose their identity.

6. Way forward

Undeniably globalization as a dominant force of change will continually yield both positive and negative impacts in the culture of tribal living in the study area. Whether it is needed or not changes are sure to happen being inevitable as well as a continuous social process. Therefore, it is more important to put efforts to mitigate than making effort to militate the negative impacts of globalization for sustainable cultural changes with deep contemplation and speculation time and again. In nutshell, acceptance of acculturation as accelerated by globalization is not a bad step forward. But the thing which matter is that, we must not forget our own culture. Judging from the present study's generalization following are some of the suggestions for sustainable cultural change among the tribal of Korang village in particular and Arunachal Pradesh in general:

1. At home to communicate to child/children every parent must use their own dialect and educate their children about their tradition and custom focusing on positive and negative attributes of their culture.

2. Some workshop/debate or other brainstorming programme should be organized by the elders in the village community hall (*deerv*) for educating the tribal mass about their culture and develop analytical and critical ability to judge the cultural change so that they can learn, transform the negative aspects, preserve and pass their culture to the next generation.
3. During festival celebrations, some cultural programme and drama should be organized emphasizing on the tribal culture.
4. Different mass-media like television, radio, books, comics, magazine, documentary, comics, film, animated movies, etc. should be used to disseminate information and educate the tribal mass regarding their culture.
5. In school, from upper primary to secondary level there should be a period under SUPW to train children to develop skills to make their traditional items (weaving, craft making etc.), cooking etc.

7. Acknowledgement

The author express her deep hearty thanks to all the interviewees for extending their full support in providing the information needed for writing the present paper and hospitality provided during the field visit. Further, she also extends her gratefulness to Professor Tomo Riba, Department of Geography, Rajiv Gandhi University, to provide his valuable suggestions to improve the paper.

8. References

- i. Directorate of Census Operation, Arunachal Pradesh (2011), District Census Handbook East Siang
- ii. Ezhilarasu, E., 2014, Impact of Globalization on Tribals in India, Indian Journal of Applied Research, Vol.4 (10), Pp. 176 – 178.
- iii. Koul, L., 1996, Methodology of Educational Research, 3rd edi., Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi.
- iv. Lala, M. S., 2014, Globalization and its Impact on Indigenous Food Habits and Culture of the Khasi Community of The North East, International Journal of English Language, Literature and Humanities, Vol. II (II), Pp. 255 – 259.
- v. Pal, T., 2011, Changing Tribal Culture: Photo-Geographical Explanation, Current Research Journal of Social Science, Vol. (6), Pp. 483 – 489.
- vi. Riba, T., 2003, The Tribals and Their Changing Environment, Himalayan Publishers, Legi Shopping Complex, Bank Tinali, Post Box No.177, Itanagar – 791111, Arunachal Pradesh.
- vii. Sahoo, A., 2014, Traditionalism and Globalization: A Discourse on Tribal Transformation, Odisha Review, Pp. 92 – 98.