



Megalithic culture in Munda tribe of Khunti district in Jharkhand

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Abstract

The evidence of Megalithic culture is still full throughout the world. This can be called the culture of big stone. However, England stone is quite famous for the culture of the Megalithic, also called Stonehenge. Indian Megalithic culture also places a special place for stone culture. In Indian perspective it is obvious that the culture of Megalithic is only present in the tribes here. There is evidence of stone in many tribes like Asur, Ho, Santal, Munda etc. which are inseparable from the tribes of the state of Jharkhand. Which can be seen especially in the Munda tribes.

Keywords: megalith, munda tribe, tomb, memorial, Khunti district

Introduction

Methodology

This research article has been used to compile the facts and information related to the research topic and for the qualitative and quantitative facts in the research article, the following sources and techniques have been used. The research article the research article presented is based on the Munda tribe of Khunti District. For which Siddho Karanj toli village has been selected. Under the primary sources Observation, Participant Observation, Interview, Schedule, Focus Group Discussion and Annual Report Letters, Magazines, internet, books etc. have been used under secondary sources.

Introduction

Knowing ancient times and human civilization has to be dependent on archeology. There is evidence of megaliths history, which is related to monuments made of large stone. Although civilizations in history have not been permanent its evidence is found on this earth. The English meaning of the word Mahapashan is called Megalith, which is derived from Greek word Megas it means greatness and Lithas generated from stone. As the name implies the period of great stones or big stone is only a Megalithic. The Megalithic are symbols of monuments built with large stones. The culture of Megalithic is used for structure and monuments that are related to rituals or tombstone. Reburial Culture is found in every corner of the world. It is present in almost every religion, cast and tribe. Reburial culture is particularly visible in tribal societies. 'Potlatch' is also a clear example of reburial culture. Potlatch is given by native people of coastal areas of North America. In this people of this group do activities related to social prestige, which is also a type of reburial culture. Similarly, tribes of Nicobar also make reburial culture. This is called 'Kinrak' festival. This type of reburial culture exists in many tribal societies. Although reburial culture seen in all tribal societies, but not all belonging to the Megalithic. Only a few tribal societies are such that the Megalithic culture is found.

Jharkhand state is a tribal dominant area. A total of 32 types of

tribes are residing in this state. The culture of all these tribes is unique. One of the cultural characteristics of these tribes is the funeral rites. In fact, funeral rites are performed in almost all the tribes but funeral rites of Munda tribe are special because the funeral rites of the Munda tribe are directly related to the culture of the Megalithic.

Munda tribe is the third largest tribe of the state of Jharkhand. It is considered not only Jharkhand but also of ancient inhabitants of the whole country. Which is mainly found in Ranchi, West Singhbhum, East Singhbhum, khunti, Gumla Palamu, Bokaro etc. but Ranchi and Khunti is the main residence of them. Three things are important especially in their culture it is Sarna, Akhara and Sagaan. Sagaan is a unique traditional of this tribe, which gives them special recognition in the cultural field. It is also called Sasandiri or Hadgadi.

Discussion

This Megalithic culture of Munda tribe is also called Hadgadi in the local language. In general, it is seen that the word Hadgadi is directly related to the process of burying the bone, but the Hadgadi does not have the correct meaning. One of the most typical customs of Munda tribe's death rites is the Hadgadi practice. During this ritual, the bone and cowry is also buried with it, which separates Munda tribe from other social features of society. In this ritual, people of Munda tribe consider cowries as bone from and bury it with great joy.

In Munda tribe, Hadgadi is also called Sasandiri. Hadgadi, is a hindi translation of Mundari word Sasandiri. Its literal meaning is related to turmeric stone. This term has been tried by many historians and Anthropologist is defining their own way. It can be understood in the same sense that Sasandiri or Hadgadi is a social process that binds the designated human groups socially and religiously and based on social customs and laws. The most important fact to understand it that first of all, the social system of the Munda tribe is clearly understood as the law system. The rules related to customs in the Munda tribe are not written. At present, some customs related laws

are being made so that their identity can be seen in history. Even the Indian constitution has been providing protection for the customs of these. According to customs of the Munda tribe, it is compulsory for every person to bury the bone in the Sasandiri. For that Sasandiri, there is a special place in Munda tribe which is considered as a holy place. The place is for a clan lineage group. At present, it is also found that some Munda perform burial ceremonies and some shaven fires also do. There, the people who ignite the ritual do Sasandiri in the immediate year, While those who perform funeral prayers, the Munda society performs Sasandiri rituals in such number of even years as 3, 5, 7.

Sasandiri Ritual

Due to belonging to the Megalithic culture, Sasandiri of Munda tribe is considered a unique tradition. It is one of the major cultures of Munda tribe. Currently, after the death, the Munda tribe performs cremation and burial ceremonies. After death, the Munda tribe has to undergo different types of customs like- to fill the pit, put in shadow, to take smoke etc. The Sasandiri is done only after these customs. In this tribe, the Sasandiri is celebrated in two forms-

i) Hadgadi Rituals

The Hadgadi itself is called a Sasandiri in Munda language. It is related to the Sashan place. Here the deadbody bone is buried. In a small pottery, Urad Dal, Paddy, Lawa, Oil, Hadiya (Rice liquar) is inserted along with bones as well. After that a large stone is thickened. This verb consists of a clan group and Priests (Pahan) of that group. They go to perform this verb by playing instrument like Dhol and Nagara. All the going people of the village go together in the forest and break large stones. This stone is buried only, which is a symbol of a lineage group. When a person dies, new stone is not condensed for its Hadgadi rituals; rather, the bones of that person are buried under a previously buried stone belonging to the person of the deceased person. Similarly, even after the death of a woman, the bones of a woman, the bones of that woman are buried under the already buried women Hadgadi rituals. If there is a death due to a major, disease, then there is a separated Sashan place outside the village.

ii) Hadgadi Festival

The Hadgadi is a traditional festival of Munda tribe, which is mainly celebrated in Poush (December) month. On the day, the Hadgadi of their own clan is cleaned. At this place all the clan groups of the tribe gather and celebrate this festival. On this day people of the clan group remember their ancestors. On this day all people make Paddy Lawa in their homes. Urad Dal and Oil are mixed in this Lawa. Along with this, Hadiya, Water, Rice, Tobbacco, Chuna (lime), Sindur etc is also offered. This is done by the Priest (Pahan). Women are also involved in this festival. It is celebrated with pomp. These people eat food after worshiping their Hadgadi. The Munda tribe believes that doing so keeps the eyes of their ancestor and adorable grace.

Social importance of Sasandiri

This is a social institution of Munda society. In addition people of one clan are tied together, Thereby increasing the

unity of affinity. This program is often done at the beginning of the year. It is celebrated with great enthusiasm. This program is done at a special clan group place outside the village. After the death, the bones of that dead person are buried at the Sasandiri spat. On which a big stone is buried. For which people of a clan group decide a certain day and invite people from all their clan by inviting them. Often it has been observed that in a village there are a large number of people of the same clan. Its root cause is related to Sasandiri those who are staying for away from their village, they also come in their original place for the Sasandiri or where they have their Sasandiri site and make a Sasandiri. This kind of process keeps mutual peace.

Religious importance of Sasandiri

Sasandiri is a sacred place. Tribes are a group of nature worshipers and soul believers. That is they are directly related to the power present in the natural and the supernatural power of the soul. For this reason, it creates a place for those supernatural powers, which can be seen as a Sasandiri. So they bury their ancestor's bones at this place. At this place, the Sasandiri program is done by the Pahan (priest) of Munda society. In this program, the munda of the other clan cannot take part.

Both Sashan and Mashan both have special significance in Munda tribe. Funeral rites are performed in Masan but there is a ritual of bone and cowry burial in the Sashan. In Sasandiri, Munda religion related discussions are done by elder of Munda tribe. That is through the same way the Munda tribe gets the knowledge of their religion.

Statutory importance of Sasandiri

Sasandiri has a special significance from the legal point of view. This place is related to one clan of Munda group, having a Sasandiri of one clan make it clear that the land of that village is the property of that clan. On the basis of this Sasandiri this Sasandiri of Munda tribe can also be prepared. So that it can also be clarified that who is the original person of that lineage and who is his heir. Therefore, the statutory importance of the Sasandiri is related to the property of the Munda tribe. Which is unique is itself, because on the basis of it the lineage of a tribe can be ascertained.

At present, this culture is gradually getting merged in history. Many reason for these are clearly visible like- exposure to non-tribes, effects of Christianization, religion change, lack of interest in religions activity etc. it is also often found in the present time that people lack the time, due to which the people do not want to participate in this program and the lack of interest in them is clearly visible. The youth are going to ignore it even more.

Nature of changed Sasandiri

Culture is a continuous process but there is cultural change in this. Various culture changes have also occurred is present in the Munda tribe at the present time, but there are certain changes in this. Today Sashandiri culture does not exist in this original form.

Attracting attention to the traditional Sasandiri, it is known that earlier Munda tribe had their own Sashan place was for a clan group only. There was another Sashan place for people

with the other clan. People from other clan were not allowed to go to the Sashan place for which the place was located for another lineage group. A large stone was thickened for each family of the lineage group. Bones were buried under this stone. If a person is living somewhere far from his village and that person dies. In this situation, his family would have cremated his anywhere, but his Sasandiri was used only in his native place. The people of the past used to wait for many years for the Sasandiri, because earlier Munda people used to perform burial ceremonies. When the body was destroyed completely, the bones were removed from the Mashan place and buried in Sashan place.

But today there has been a lot of change in this. Today Munda tribes are becoming different from their traditional customs due to the busyness of time there is now a lot of Sasandiri in the same Munda village. Now these people have started making Sasandiri according to their conveniences. All the customs are terminated soon after the death of some one. Sasandiri rituals is also terminated within ten days; now they begun to bury the Cowry and Clay mannequin in their Sasandiri and accept the claws as bones. Instead of large stone, now they are starting to make small stones, because it requires a lot of labour to raise large stone. Today youths shy away from doing this kind of work. The working class does not want to do this work quickly. That's way it is also one of the major reasons for extinction of the Sasandiri.

Now the unity of the clan-lineage group has also become less visible with the permission of the Priest (Pahan), it also gives place to people of other clan in their Sasandiri. The inadequacy of the native village for the Sasandiri also seems to have ended. Some people are building Sasandiri near their home. Therefore, it can be said that the threat of identity, the stone of the Munda tribe and their Megalithic culture are going to assimilation very soon.

Conclusion

The Megalithic culture found in the Munda tribe residing in Khunti district is a different identity. Here, big stone have been erected on their Sashan. Here, some of the other Megalithic culture, which is attached to their Sashan have a stone in which the stone is lying In the state, Which relates to Asur tribe. Below are some conclusions of this research article.

- The Sasandiri found in Munda tribe is related to the culture of Megalithic.
- The Sasandiri is important from social and religions view of Munda tribe.
- The relation to economic status, property relation and lineage of Munda tribe also lies in Sasandiri.
- Being socially and religiously important, they find mutual harmony.

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