

A

Research Project

on

**Documentation of Oral Tradition  
and  
Folk Culture in Tribes of Bastar, Chhattisgarh**

by

**Prof. Mitashree Mitra  
Co-ordinator  
Center for Integrated Tribal Studies  
Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University  
Raipur, Chhattisgarh**

*in collaboration with*

**Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya, Bhopal**

**2017**

# **DOCUMENTATION OF ORAL TRADITION AND FOLK CULTURE IN TRIBES OF BASTAR, CHHATTISGARH**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION:**

Chhattisgarh, nascent State of India took birth on November 1, 2000. Chhattisgarh located in the midst of India, is popular for world famous tribal heartland of Bastar and rich culture heritage. Every third citizen of the State is a tribal. The tribal constitute 32.46 percent of total population of the State. The rich tribal culture of the state has been embedded with folk, dance, intricate work of artisans like wood work, bell metal work, wrought iron work, terra cotta work, sculpture, painting, folk songs, folk tales, material culture etc. All these cultural components have shaped the rich tribal cultural heritage of the State.

The Gond Tribe and their sub groups including Muria, Maria and Abujhmaria of Bastar region possess rich traditional expressive culture shared within familial, ethnic occupational, regional and religions groups. These cultural components have been manifested through wide range creative and symbolic forms. These components are conceived and concealed within traditional customs, belief, technical skills, art language, music, play, dance, drama, rituals, handicraft, oral histories. These are sustained through oral tradition. Besides, the tribes like Bhatras, Dhurwas Halbas, Dorlas of Bastar region have rich oral tradition and expressive culture which have not so far been explored through ethnographic research. Besides, other ethnic groups have endowed with rich cultural heritage in forms of local legacies. The unrecorded traditions of oral history, story telling and occupational lore of different ethnic groups are enriched with potential traditional expressive cultural components. The occupational lore of basket makers (Kamars), hunters, shifting cultivators, potters, wine makers, costume makers, ornament makers, folk artists have not been explored for greater interest of preservation of rich cultural heritage of the State. The social, ceremonial, rituals aesthetic and religious events reflect rich cultural components and expression of traditional wisdom. The indigenous knowledge concerning health care, agriculture, architect, preservation and conservation of forests, handicraft design provide exposure to local traditional wisdom and technology which carry many useful clues for their development and prosperity. For example, the tribals have knowledge about many herbs, which works wonder in treatment of T.B., bone fracture, family planning, asthma etc. A very little work has been done on exploration of the indigenous knowledge in relation to their survival and prosperity.

The department of culture, Government of Chhattisgarh has initiated commendable and praise worthy intervention for preservation, commercialization and promotion of rich material culture of the State. The massive projects are being implemented by this department with active participation of folk artists.

The process of globalization has hijacked the cultural diversities of tribes of the State very rapidly as compared to other States of India. The IT has introduced in some

villages of Bastar where the artisans have facilitated by direct interaction with foreign buyers and selling their items in foreign market. The intervention of NGOs, Missionaries and other intermediaries have backed up the process of transformation among tribals and eliminated the socio-culture boundaries hindering their assimilation with main stream of development.

No doubt, such rapid transformations have provided adequate inputs for commercialization of tribal handicrafts and expanded their marketing outlet. The peripheral transformations and the trends of isolation from traditional heritage have not been assessed in terms of loss and gain by any one so far. There is an urgent need to preserve, protect and promote the components of traditional expressive culture embedded with rich cultural heritage of Chhattisgarh.

So far perhaps no other planned study has initiated for documenting community life, traditional culture, oral histories, traditional stories, occupational lore, and ephemera as a part of preservation of rich cultural heritage of the State. Any attempt initiated towards visual and non-visual documentations of these components will supplement partially the major efforts undertaken by Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya, Bhopal, Department of Culture for preservation, protection and promotion of cultural heritage of Chhattisgarh.

## **2.0 About “Center for Integrated Tribal Studies” (CITS) :**

A new innovative center “Centre for Integrated Tribal Studies” (along with six other centers), as proposed in the XII FYP and RUSA document by the University came into force from October 2015 as per the decision in the meeting held in the Vice Chancellor’s chamber on 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2015 under the Chairmanship of Honourable Vice Chancellor Prof. S. K. Pandey, Pt. Ravishankar Shankar Shukla University, Raipur (C.G.).

It was approved in the meeting of Standing Committee of Academic Council held on 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2015 and Executive Council held on 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2015 and notified by the university vide letter no. 230/Acad./2016 Raipur dated 6.1.2016 and No. 468/Acad/2016 Raipur dated 28.1.2016.

## **3.0 ADOPTED AREA :**

Bastar region comprising of Bastar, Kanker and Dantewada districts of the State will be covered under initial phase of the Project. Major tribes and other ethnic groups with rich cultural heritage will be covered.

## **4.0 EXPECTED OUT-PUT OF THE PROJECT :**

1. Resource Directory of folk artists and organization will be published.
2. One website dedicated to cultural heritage of Chhattisgarh be designed and operated through the CITS.
3. Posters on folk dance, folk arts, craft be designed and distributed among appropriate circle.
4. Visual documentation of traditional culture be made and acquired.

5. Annually at least one folk culture exploration camps involving scholars of anthropology and other disciplines be organized in different cultural regions.
6. Participating community level workshop of folk artists shall be organized periodically to assess their needs, problems and rehabilitation prospective.
7. Story telling festivals of traditional story tellers shall be organized for the first time after formation of the State.
8. Commercial feasibility of Museum shops be assessed through experiment of this pilot project.
9. On the successful implementation of the project, the feasibility of promoting State Institute of Folk Life and culture be assessed.

#### **5.0 DURATION : 02 Years**

The project has been planned for two years. On the basis of assessment of the Project, the IGRMS, Bhopal may consider for further period of extension in Jashpur, Surguja and Raigarh districts for promoting Folk Life and culture.

#### **6.0 OBJECTIVES :**

1. To protect, preserve and document different components of folk life, traditional expressive culture of Chhattisgarh preserved through oral history.
2. To prepare and publish State level Resource Directory of folk artists, e.g., traditional singers, instrumental musicians, story tellers, craft people, costume makers. The directory will also cover village festivals and major folk life organization of the State. The directory will be published in two volumes.
3. To bring out oral tradition, local innovation, foodways, folk lore of health and sickness, religious folk lore, agriculture folk lore of Chhattisgarh.
4. To conduct research on folk life of Chhattisgarh through fieldwork and folk culture exploration camps organized from time to time.
5. To publish, disseminate and distribute multi coloured poster with messages on traditional expressive culture of Chhattisgarh.
6. To develop and operate an appropriate website on folk life and oral tradition of Chhattisgarh and circulate on line to attract folk lorist and experts from other parts of the globe.
7. To initiate cultural exchange programme between folk artists of Chhattisgarh and folk artists of other parts of the country as well as s world through online interaction.
8. To collaborate cooperate with Department of Culture, Tourism and Tribal Development, Government of Chhattisgarh in their efforts to achieve the objectives of project.
9. To explore the cultural links between folk artists and culture of Chhattisgarh and folk artists and cultures of other parts of the country.
10. To acquired original colour and black and white photographs in any format depicting folk life of Chhattisgarh in context of material culture and oral tradition.

11. To develop audio tapes, video tapes and photographs, slides on folk life of Chhattisgarh. The festivals and rituals of tribes observed through out the year shall be covered under visual documentation.
12. To organize story telling festival inviting traditional oral history experts from different communities.
13. Examining feasibility and experiment on promotion of museum shops to create marketing outlet for sell of slides, poster, greeting cards, ethnic ornaments and costumes, calendars, embroidered articles.

## **7.0 WORK PLAN :**

The following strategies will be adopted to achieve the objectives of the project:-

### **1. RESOURCE DIRECTORY OF FOLK ARTISTS :**

Both primary and secondary information will be collected by research team of the project as per structured format to compile the directory. We would like to cover information on traditional singers, instrumental musicians, story tellers, folk dance artists, craft people, costume makers, folk lore organizations etc. This will be very valuable documents. Multi coloured photographs of customs, instruments, artists will be included in this directory. This directory will also cover village festivals and calendar of customs practiced the tribes.

### **2. DATA COLLECTION AND PUBLICATION OF FOLK LIFE OF CHHATTISGARH :**

The data collection will cover ethnographic research on various aspects of folk life and local legacies, e.g. local traditions, traditional stories, oral histories, occupational lores, folklore of sickness and health, food ways, agriculture folk lore, religious folk lore, art folk lore, environment and forest folk lore, traditional design and architect folk lore, traditional wisdom or indigenous knowledge on health care, agriculture, forest conservation, community development, grass root innovations and others dimensions of traditional expressive culture etc. The findings of research studies conducted by research team of the project will be published and circulated among different related agencies of the country and world. This would disseminate information on oral tradition and folk life of Chhattisgarh.

### **3. EPHEMERA :**

Efforts will be made to maintain research level collection of ephemera relating to folk life of tribes of Bastar, Chhattisgarh. Colourful posters depicting folk culture and oral tradition of Chhattisgarh shall be designed, published and distributed. Steps will be taken to collect such posters and newspaper articles on folk life of other States.

#### **4. WEBSITE ON FOLK CULTURE OF CHHATTISGARH :**

One appropriate website on folk culture of Chhattisgarh shall be developed and made functional. Those will cover information on different folk artists, State Government projects and programmes, art and craft, information on the village of folk artists, information on calendar of customs and folk events so on. Steps will be taken to promote cultural exchange programme between folk artists of the State and folk artists of other countries. This website will accommodate folk club news letter of different folk artists group of the State.

#### **5. FOLK CULTURE EXPLORATION CAMP :**

The periodic camps on folk culture exploration involving students of anthropology and local persons etc. will be organized in different interior tribal villages. Each camp will cover intensive ethnographic research, field work on oral histories, occupational lores, ethnic music and art, folk lore of health agriculture and environment etc. The ethnographic data collection will be made by the group through active participation of the folk artists at grass root situation.

#### **6. VISUAL DOCUMENTATION OF TRADITIONAL CULTURE :**

The black and white, colour photographs, audio tapes, video tapes, CD motion picture will be adopted for documenting a wide range of cultural traditions throughout Bastar. Such visual documents in context of cultural traditions of other States and countries will also be acquired for the cultural archives. Rare commercial recording of traditional music will be preserved and promoted.

#### **7. STORY TELLING FESTIVALS :**

Story telling festivals involving traditional story tellers and experts on oral histories will be organized periodically to provide enlivening touch to languishing cultural trends of the tribes of Bastar.

#### **8. PROMOTION OF MUSEUM SHOPS :**

The feasibility of promotion of museum shops to deal with cards, posters, calendars, CD, audio tapes, traditional naments and orcostumes, embroidered articles be examined. Entrepreneur development programme be integrated museum shops for providing marketing opportunities to material culture of the State thereby search for opportunity to elevate economic status.

#### **8.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION :**

Review Meeting will be conducted time to time with collaborator (IGRMS, Bhopal). The work assessment shall be made on the basis of output indicators and work plan of the project. Interim Progress Report shall be submitted from time to time.

## 9.0 ORGANISATIONAL FRAMEWORK :

Sl.No.	Designation	Qualification	No.	Job Responsibilities
1	<b>Prof. Sarit Choudhury</b>  <b>and</b> <b>Prof. Mitashree Mitra</b> <b>PIs (Honorary)</b>	Anthropologist with more than 25 years experience of working in Tribal areas	2	Designing tools and strategies for ethnographic survey in conformity with objectives of the project. We will guide staff, monitor the progress and evaluate the performance.
2	<b>Junior Research Fellow</b>	P.G. in Anthropology/ Fine Art/ with 2 years experience in conducting field work among tribals of Chhattisgarh.	2	Field work in tribal area. Collection of ethnographic data, assisting PIs in data entry, editing and compiling of data and newsletters, organizing camps and workshops etc.
3	<b>Photographer (Part time)</b>	Person with professional experience in Video & Still Photography & working among Tribals of Chhattisgarh.	1	He will be hired during field documentation and is responsible for Audio-Video recording of folk songs, dance, cultural events, story telling, art & crafts as per objectives of the project etc.
4	<b>Field Assistant (Part time)</b>	Local elite having rapport with artisans and folk artists groups and understanding their language.	2	They will be engaged time-to-time during field work, camp and workshops organized at field level etc.
5	<b>Accountant/CA (Part time)</b>	Any person with strong command on account keeping Cash Book and Ledger preparing.	1	He will be engaged on part time basis for updating all account records and registers of the project.

## 10.0 COST ESTIMATE :

The cost of the project has been estimated in terms of total man month and facilities needed and calculated under following headings :

Sl. No.	Particulars	No.	Salary Rs./P.M	Duration/ Months	Amt. (Rs.) Required	Total Amt. (Rs.)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	<b>Manpower</b>					
	a) Junior Research Fellow	2	24000.00	24 Months	288000.00 x 2 = 576000.00 x 2 = 1152000.0	1152000.0
	b) Photographer (Video & Still) (Part time)	1	L.S.	Time to Time Approx. 6 visit per year	25000.0 x 6 = 150000.0 x 2 = @25000.00 per visit	300000.00
	c) Field Assistant (Part time local person)	2	L.S.	Time to Time Approx. 6 visit per year @Govt. daily wages rate for skilled worker per visit per person	100000.00 x 2 = 200000.00	200000.00
	d) Accountant/CA (Part time)	1	L.S.	Twice, during submission of account in each financial year	10000.00 x 2 = 20000.00	20000.00
	<b>Sub-Total- 1 (a-d)</b>			-	-	<b>1672000.0</b>
2	Travel (Hiring basis Vehicle/ Sumo/Tavera as per Government rate)		L.S.	Time to Time during field work	-	200000.00
3	Boarding and Lodging in the field		L.S.	Time to Time during field work		100000.00
4	Stationary, Printing, Photocopy, Battery, DVDs/External Hard Disk, Pen Drive & Postage etc		L.S.			100000.00
5	Tape Recorder Sony with accessories	2	-	-	-	15000.00
6	Designing, Developing and activating website	-	-	-	-	30000.00
7	Organizing community level story telling festivals	2	-	-	-	50000.00

Sl. No.	Particulars	No.	Salary P.M. (Rs.)	Duration/ Months	Amt. Required (Rs.)	Total Amount (Rs.)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	Organizing village level workshop of Folk artists (each workshop @ Rs. 25000*6	6 workshops	-	-	-	150000.00
9	Cost of editing video and audio cassettes developing CD, photographs, scanning etc.	L.S.	-	-	-	40000.00
10	Orientation workshop of staff.	L.S.	-	-	-	15000.00
11	Supporting rapport developing activities with artisans through incentives gifts on continual basis at field	L.S.	-	-	-	25000.00
12	Organization of Folk culture exploration camp (each camp 7 days with 10 scholars) @ 30000 per camp (L.S.)	2 camps	-	-	-	60000.00
13	Contingencies and misc. expenses	L.S.	-	-	-	30000.00
14	Seminar at University/IGRMS	8	-	-	-	50000.00
	<b>Sub Total -2 (2-14)</b>					<b>865000.00</b>
15	Overhead Institutional charges (10% )					<b>86500.00</b>
	<b>Grand Total 1-15 Rs.</b>					<b>2623500.0</b>

(Rupees Twenty Six Lakh and Twenty Three Thousand five hundred only)

**Prof. Mitashree Mitra**  
**Coordinator**  
**Center for Integrated Tribal Studies**  
**Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University, Raipur**