

# RELIGION AND WORLD VIEW OF BANJARA PEOPLE KOKSARA BLOCK, KALAHANDI DISTRICT, ODISHA

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**Abstract** : Religion fulfills basic, universal human needs, by enabling people to cope with the unknown and uncontrollable. The real purpose of religion as given by Durkheim is to express people's belief about the universe. Religion structures the universal, puts things in order, relates what is unknown to what is known. Bronislaw Malinowski pointed out the nature of the social order is justified in the myth that people create and in which they believe. Thus Myth explain why this would in the way it is and why that should remain that way. As a part the system of beliefs about the nature of the universe, Religion offers a guide to peoples' behavior, including a system of rules they must follow. This article highlights the worldview of the Banjara on some specific issues related to religion.

## I. INTRODUCTION

World view reflects how the people comprehend the life situation and with what mental makeup they do so. Therefore, world view is the expression of totality of experience. World view describes the whole reality, secular, sacred, physical and supernatural. The world view of a culture is the basic outlook of the most of the members of a society.

World view provides order for human exist, like religion, magic, myth, ritual all stand for world view. Every society provides deity by which it reflects worldview of the society. The way in which they propitiate is their worldview. Supernatural world is just an extension of social reality for projection of society. It is not merely a philosopher by product of each culture

Surjit Sinha (1957) in his paper on the tribal culture of peninsular India, suggests the ideological system of the tribal covers man to supernatural, man to Nature and man to man relationship. God is classified as benevolent and malevolent. These God are portrayed as being more interested in personal loyalty than in any demonstration of ethical or moral virtues. Ritual is performed mainly to avoid sickness and death. There is belief in existence of soul after birth. They have no idea about heaven, hell, no renewal, no punishment good or bad deeds after death. (S.C Dube, 1977)

## METHODOLOGY

The study is mainly based on field work data collection methods. Both participant and non participant observation method is followed. The structured and unstructured interview method is adopted. Filling in the forms of preliminary census for each unit giving vital statistics about social structure. Along with this stratified sampling method is adopted to collect various data.

## OBJECTIVE

The objective of my study is to know the world view of Banjara people, which help me ultimately to explore the Banjara configuration and religious perception.

## DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Geographically Banjaras are distributed in almost all areas India. In Odisha Banjaras are mostly widespread in Sambalpur, Sonepur, Kalahandi, Nuapada Koraput, Bargarh and Bolangir districts. The total population is 20997 according to 2011 census. The Banjaras are known as nomadic groups of people who move from place to place for the purpose of trade and commerce. The name of Banjara is derived from the Sanskrit root

“Banijya Kara” a merchant. Historically they are said to exist in between 600 BC to 360 BC in India. Some evidence said they are even found in Europe, especially in Italy with name “Lambard”. Banjaras have come to Odisha territory in recent past and have got the status of schedule tribes. They speak very good Hindi. Their mother tongue is “Gorgoli”.

The study was undertaken in Koksara Block. Koksara block is in Kalahandi District. It is 508 km from capital city of Odisha (Bhubaneswar). The different Banjara villages from where the data are collected are Dabriguda, Hanspada, Mushapali, Sarasamal, Behera etc. The population of Hanspada from total population 428 (99%), the Banjaras are 175 (40.89%) but in Dabriguda the total population is 383(99.99%) and the Banjaras are 138 (36.63%) numbers.

There are two types of world view theory, one is Naturalistic world view and other is super naturalistic.

## NATURALISTIC WORLD VIEW :

Naturalism is the environment approach, which achieves adjustment by altering some part of the environment itself, so as to change interaction between the material factors, which produce phenomena. Every society so matter how “primitive” has a body of naturalistic customs by which it adjust to its environment. The customs, which from society’s naturalist theory, are science while customary naturalistic practices are its technology (Slotkin,1950).

**A. The Banjara universe:** The traditional Banjara people’s idea of universe is far away from the modern scientific theories. They have no idea about real size of earth. They divide the whole universe as “sky or swarg”, “earth or marta” and under the ground or “patala”. They have belief that after the death of a person, good and noble soul go to “sarag” and evil soul go to “patala” or “narak”. Indra is the king of all Gods and Goddess. They believe on earth different types of plants, trees, insects, cocks, goats, air, as well as dam are present. They belief those who have life present on earth. At early time God Vishnu was under the ground and also his snake. The whole universe is controlled by Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva. The Banjara people think, the thunder and storm happened when supernatural deities are dissatisfied with the people.

**B. Concept of Time :** The Banjara people determine their time with the help of Sun and Moon. They calculate the month with the help of full Moon and new Moon. The young are more conscious about the time than the old people.

When the cock crows it is early Morning. When they feel slight heat that means it is 7 or 8 Pm in the morning. When they feel slight more heat or hungry that means it is 12 or 1 Pm in the afternoon. When pigeon sounds three times in the night then it is midnight or if they see stars forming a shape of plugging machine, it may be midnight.

But now they are changing and using different types of clock and watches to know the times.

**C. Knowledge of Ecology:** Banjaras are very close to their environment. They depend on forest. They worship their mountain for rain and protection. The animals are categorized as eatable and non eatable animals and sacrificed in the name of deities. Mainly the Sal tree (saragi) and Piasal tree(Bija) are valuable for them.

**D. Occupation categories:-** Banjaaras are agriculturalist .In every season they cultivate different types of crops. Besides this most of the people have cows, bulls, goats.

The people due to education are no more attached to their traditional occupation. But due to impact of industrialization and urbanization, they are well acquainted with the modern technologies in agriculture.

**E. Knowledge of Society:** The people divide themselves on the basis of their Clan. They believe in clan exogamy. They have matrilineal societies .They believe the Laudia clan is superior to other clans. The different clans are Laudia, Kelut, Pamar, Ortia, Jharabal etc.

They give very much respect to their parents and Nayak (village headman). The family headman control the affairs of the family. All members take part in cultivation. The elder person of village take part in all types of decision making process of village.

They give respect to religious specialist and intelligent people. They think women should be under the control of men.

**Ceremonial friendship:** In Ceremonial friendship they are not confined to their own tribe. They establish relation with other castes or tribes people also."Makara" and "Gajamung" are some names of their ceremonial friendship. But this friendship is restricted to the same sex group. They are very much conscious about their natural environment, customs and tradition.

**Concept of Deities-**The Banjara believe, when they take any stone, clean it and put vermilion mark on it, then it is an idol of Deities to them. The vermilion is the symbol of purity. so the married women always put vermilion on their forehead.

They thought God does not want any sacrifice during any worship and they said "kha" to satisfy their offerings. According to them Monday and Sunday is good for worship of God. But Saturday and Tuesday is preferred for the worship of the Goddess. For marriage Wednesday and Sunday are preferred by them. They thought Wednesday and Sunday are very good for farming, agriculture and other works. They named it as "Siddhi vara". Saturday is very bad for starting any new works.

Along with this they have a great respect for their religious specialist. These prestigious people maintain a great status in their village and never touch the lower caste people. The people have a belief in "Animism". They also believe various types of soul and spirit. Banjaras worship dead ancestors spirits. They have believe on different benevolent and malevolent spirit. They also believe on witchcraft.

Due to different modern impacts the world view are changing .The peripheral elements of these people are changing but the core elements which are mostly attached to religion and their World view still found intact and changed only to some extent.

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