



Bhoonda Mahayajna: AN Enlivening Symbol of Himalayan Cultural Heritage

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ABSTRACT

Socio-cultural Traditions play vital role in sustainable development of Himachal Himalayas. The folk culture, folklores, folktales and connected festivals not only provide wholesome entertainment to the concerned, but it is a reflection of the social standard, its originality and usefulness. Himachal Himalayas- a region of temples and gods affords an ample environment to strengthen spiritual, aesthetic and ethical values. An extensive study of the subject traces the Origin of the Bhoonda Mahayajna to prehistoric times and is suggestive of the fact that all the settlements and rituals of the past are not mounds alone but still continue to thrive by retaining its essential basic features of life and culture. Besides an enlivening symbol of Himalayan cultural heritage Bhoonda Mahayajna depicts an exquisite display of temple administration. It plays a significant role in the sustainable development by, generation of employment; fostering of social integrity and brotherhood; installation of divine devotion; fervour and religious belief; promotion of spiritualistic, aesthetic, socio-economic, scientific and ecological values and last but not the least, the infrastructural development with the role of media and government.

KEYWORDS : Sustainable, heritage, yajna, environment

INTRODUCTION

"Bhoonda"- "The Cosmic or Golden egg" is the story of the formation of Universe and the emanation of all beings from it. Followed by propitiation of "Parashakti"- "The Divine mother" to get rid off kamapralaya caused by Bhandasura as evident from Brahmanda Purana, the Yajna performed to attain the liberation was later patronized by Parashurama to atone for his sins. He instituted triennial series of yajnas in the form of Bhadoji, Bhadpur, Shand and Bhoonda Mahayajna- as the terminal of the cycle. Various described as a fair, ceremony, jag or sacrificial festival, Bhoonda Mahayajna was regularly performed every twelfth year through the millennia until the first decade of the 20th century. By playing vital role in the sustainable development of the Himalayan region, it has become an enlivening symbol of Himalayan cultural heritage.

In the Bhoonda rituals, one can visualize the beginning of the caste system and the supreme importance, the community attached to fidelity rites involving women of the highest strata of the society. It is evident that the Harappans who might have been the Nagas and Aryans attached supreme importance to fidelity rites. The ceremony alludes to the alleged setting up of over 50 settlements on the banks of the river Satluj by Parasurama. Supported with epigraphical and archeological evidence, written records and traditions, legends and lores, rituals and fairs, the work establishes that the places of Bhoonda Mahayajna along Satluj valley course, Shikri valley course and Pabbar valley course are the living fossils of pre-historic ancient India.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present work started with audio-video documentation of Bachhunch Bhoonda Mahajajna in 2005 A.D. The different places of Bhoonda Mahayajna were visited. Hot discussions and debates were held with the temple functionaries, local administration and local people of the concerned places. The area of study included five sthans, four theris, places in satluj valley, pabbar valley and shikri valley.

The premier places of Bhoonda Mahayajna Known as "Panj Sthan" were set up by Parashurama. These includes the present places of Kao and Mamel in Karsog sub division of district Mandi, Nirath and Nagar in Rampur sub division of district Shimla and Nirmand in district Kullu, of Himachal Pradesh.

The four theris which were set up by Parashurama after the settlement of Brahmins at five sthans includes the present places of Iadsa, Dansa, Shingla and Shaneri, all in Rampur Sub-division of district Shimla, Himachal Pradesh.

The other Places in Satluj Valley includes Bajhetali, Khanan, Kaneda, Behna, Sholi, Deothi(Rampur sub-division); in Pabbar Valley it includes Nandla, Kulgaon and in Shikri Valley- Dalgaon, Pujarli, Bachhunch(Rohru sub-division) of Himachal Pradesh.

Institution of Learning . The very concept of Bhoonda Mahayajna is the

subject of attraction for the learners, researchers, academicians, yogis, ritual performers, parapsychologists, historians to study, visualize, analyze and investigate the said Yajna to explore it for the sustenance of Himalayan heritage.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Sustainable Development is an advancement and sustenance of natural resources, socio-economic infrastructure, cultural values, preservation of heritage and indigenous technical knowledge, augmentation of trained man –power, attainment of trained man-power, attainment of constantly rising national goals, high living standards, National Integration and nourishment of all-round progress with its utilization for the present and its preservation for the generations to come. Bhoonda Mahayajna plays a vital role in sustainable development of Himalayan region which can be attributed to varied aspects of the said Yajna.

Spiritual Aspect

Bhoonda Mahayajna is a hidden store of spiritualism, which contribute in promulgation of the spiritualistic advancement of the Himalayan region.



Cultural Aspect Religion, faith and beliefs of the Himalayan society are closely linked to culture: the religious convictions of the populace intertwined with their social life.

Music, Musicians and Musical Instruments The Hill people have been exceptionally fond of music and dancing: it runs in their veins; it is the breath of their life.



Every deity has its own Bajgis who are dressed in their traditional attires, converse with the deity, play music in accordance to the demand of the deity and serves as an important functionary during the

Bhoonda Mahayajana. The orchestra is either owned by or dedicated to the temples and so are the musicians.

Folk Dance



Socio-Economic Aspect Socio-economic infrastructure shapes the direction and sets the pace of economic development of a region.

Role of Government The announcement of the Bhoonda Mahayajna a year or so before the actual event by the temple functionaries alert, the governmental institutions at local level (Panchayats), sub-divisional and district level to carry out economic pursuits, such as, power tele communication, water supply, sanitation, sewerage, public works, roads, and transport, health care, housing, drinking water facilities etc.



Role of Media The sensationalization of event by the name of, "The valley of Death," "A fateful play," etc attracts the viewership throughout the whole world



Pre- Bhoonda Preparations includes Renovation of Temple, Construction of New houses, Renovation of old houses Procurement of Bedding, Utensils and Rations, Purchase of Ornaments-Jewellery, Making of new clothes, Village Sanitation, implementation of Code of Conduct, Division of labour,etc.

Social Integrity and brotherhood Bhoonda Mahayajna serves as the centre for social integrity and brotherhood by witnessing arrival of the guests, friends, relatives and strangers not only from within the state but also from abroad. The relatives who have not met for the past so many years, gets a chance to hug each other.



All members irrespective of caste, creed, color or sex greet each other with a ray of hope, radiance and advancement. All the individuals irre-

spective of caste, creed, colour or sex are filled with religious devotion and fervour to be a part of the said Yajna. They witness all the rituals with great awe and reverence. They seek due blessings from the deities. They forget hatred against each other if any and work together for the successful completion of the said Yajna.

Purification of Atmosphere



The positive effects of Bhoonda Mahayajna are an outcome of simultaneous functioning of many subtle scientific principles such as, effect of chanting of specific hymns and sounds on the atmosphere and mind, energies emanating from the havan kund, nutritional effect of burning of medicinal ingredients, the burning of Havan Samagri and cow's pure ghee in the Havan Kund results into the purification of the atmosphere which gives rise to an unparalleled purifying and healing phenomenon.

Para psychological Effects



Bhoonda Mahayajana is a storehouse of Parapsychological phenomena. The whole yajna is administered and controlled by the deities for its successful completion. The discipline amongst thousands of people attending the said Yajna is maintained by the concerned deities and there is no chance of mishap and quarrel which otherwise is a common feature amongst such a large number of people. It is a fine example of administration by concerned deities which is a unique heritage of the past.

CONCLUSION

An extensive study of the subject traces the Origin of the Bhoonda Mahayajna to prehistoric times and is suggestive of the fact that all the settlements and rituals of the past are not mounds alone but still continue to thrive by retaining its essential basic features of life and culture.

Besides an enlivening symbol of Himalayan cultural heritage Bhoonda Mahayajna depicts an exquisite display of temple administration. It plays a significant role in the sustainable development by, generation of employment; fostering of social integrity and brotherhood; installation of divine devotion; fervor and religious belief; promotion of spiritualistic, aesthetic, socio-economic, scientific and ecological values and last but not the least, the infrastructural development with the role of media and government.

The need of the time is to understand the exact meaning, concept and importance of Bhoonda Mahayajna besides taking essential steps to preserve it and check its extinction in order to safeguard our rich

cultural heritage.

The whole world is in shackles of terrorism, calamities and disintegration of the past systems. In order to get liberation from this destruction, Narmedha Yajna-“The yajna of the Medha of Nar” or “The utilization of the wisdom of man” has become essential for each one of us to secure life and property besides prosperity.

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