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The Khasis in Meghalaya: An Exploration of Folktales and Traditions.

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ABSTRACT:

Indigenous ethnic group in Meghalaya, India, the Khasis have a rich cultural legacy deeply anchored in oral traditions, folktales, and unique socio-cultural practices. This paper looks at the significance of Khasi folktales as a tool for safeguarding native knowledge, social norms, and history. It also examines how oral narratives influence the viewpoint of the Khasi people and their traditional practices including matriliney, religious beliefs, and social structure. Indigenous ethnic group in Meghalaya, India, the Khasis have a rich cultural legacy deeply rooted in oral traditions, folktales, and unique socio-cultural customs. Oral narratives about the Khasi people's worldview and traditional practices—such as matriliney, religious beliefs, and social organization—will be explored in this paper. .

Introduction:

One of the three major ethnic groups in Meghalaya, the Khasi people have a long oral history that has shaped their social and cultural identity. Mostly, they reside in and around the Khasi and Jaintia hills of the Northeastern state of India. The Khasi people mostly follow a matrilineal system. Their legacy therefore motivates their traditions and activities. Following marriage and wealth inheritance, this system puts women in important roles about family name transfer. A man has to stay at his mother-in-law's house after marriage; children take the mother surname; the youngest daughter in the family inherits the family treasure.

Strongly connected to agriculture, especially in growing crops in wet field, the Khasi tribe also follows a conventional farming method whereby they clear one piece of jungle, burn it and then use it for a few years. Deeply rooted in farming, their lifestyle is a significant part of their culture and wealth. The Khasi people center their existence around the natural world and have a close relationship with it. To witness their interactions with the natural world they honor Ka Shad Suk Mynsiem every April to thank Mother Nature for a good harvest season and pray for another fruitful season before the fresh sowing of seeds. The locals gather to witness a ritualistic dance performed by the unmarried women and the men of the community. The community prays for the prosperity and peace of its sect. The Khasi tribe also known as "the Hynniew trep" or "The Seven Huts"

Through story, literature, and contemporary interpretations, Khasi folklore survives despite the impact of modernisation. Rich in stories, legends, and folktales, the Khasi tribe reveals their own way of living. This paper intends to look at the Khasi folktales and traditions so investigating how these narratives preserve and reflect the identity and values of the society.

Literature review:

1.Folklore, identity and change: The Khasis of Meghalaya

S Pde.

This work looks at how folklore shapes and reflects the identity of the Khasi people, a tribal community in Meghalaya, India, undergoing modernization. It underlines the need of folklore in oral and semi-oral societies for developing, expressing, and preserving identities. Particularly in North-East India, the article underlines the potential of folklore in identity politics, therefore generating ethnic claims and conflict. It encourages a new perspective on how folklore is interpreted and how it influences community identities.

2.Ecopsychological reflections in Khasi Folks Narrative: A study of selected Folktales from Ku Rapy's tales of the Khasi.

Rupam Kumar Das, Priyanka Kalita,

Emphasizing K. U. Rapy's Tales of the Khasis, the article looks at ecopsychological motifs in Khasi folktales. Ecopsychology forms identity, well-being, and behaviour by means of the psychological connections between individuals and nature. Meghalaya's rich natural legacy provides a unique backdrop for understanding these interactions. Khasi folktales have historically included environmental themes, thus showing nature as a fountain of knowledge, healing, and spiritual growth. It stresses how folklore reflects cultural values and environmental consciousness, therefore deepening our understanding of the psychological and environmental perspectives embedded in Khasi legacy.

3. Khasi Folklore: insight that matches “The Great Ideas of Western Civilization”.

Leon Miller

Leon Miller's article looks at the relationship between Khasi native knowledge and the fundamental concepts of Western Civilization's intellectual legacy. It stresses how both cultures offer viewpoints on resolving contemporary world issues, particularly with respect to value rationality, the relationship between self-formation and social formation, and the relationship between individuals and the natural order. The paper emphasizes the need of indigenous knowledge in addressing significant dichotomies such as self-interest versus collective value creation, economic development versus environmental harmony, and nature versus humanity.

4.Oral Tradition and Matriliney

Research by Majumdar (1950) and more recent ethnographic studies show that Khasi folklore reflects and supports their matrilineal structure. Many tales have women as central figures symbolizing power, knowledge, and continuity. Folktales such "Ka Likai" (The Legend of Ka Likai) reveal the strengths and conflicts of a matrilineal society.

Conclusion:

More than simply stories, Khasi folklore and traditions are powerful weapons for cultural preservation and identity creation. Oral storytelling has helped the Khasis maintain a close connection to their past, values, and social structures. As outside forces and modernization shape their society, these oral traditions remain quite vital in maintaining the uniqueness of Khasi legacy. A rich cultural legacy still shaping the identity and customs of the Khasi people, their folktales are. These oral narratives illuminate the way of life, beliefs, and social structures of the Khasi.

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