

## EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF TOURISM ON POLITICAL CULTURE: A STUDY OF BAGHMUNDI DISTRICT IN PURULIA

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### ABSTRACT

In the serene landscapes of Baghmundi District in Purulia, an stimulating interplay between tourism and political culture unfolds. This case study explores into how the arrival of visitors shapes the political ethos of the region. As travelers traverse the picturesque terrains they involuntarily become part of a dynamic process prompting and being influenced by the political climate. Baghmundi with its rich cultural drapery serves as a microcosm where tourism and politics engage in a subtle dance. The profound connection between tourism and politics is evident in the local attitudes and perspectives. The connections between tourists and the community foster a cultural exchange that goes beyond sightseeing. It weaves a narrative where political ideologies are both shared and challenged in the various marketplace of ideas. Through the lens of Baghmundi, we witness how tourism acts as a substance for shaping political opinions. The district becomes a soft pot where diverse viewpoints congregate creating a vibrant variety of beliefs. Visitors, often unknowingly become contributors to this complicated wall-hanging leaving behind traces of their influence. This study unravels the complex dynamics, revealing that tourism is not merely about attractive landscapes but a force that molds the political perception of a region. Baghmundi becomes a canvas where the brushstrokes of tourism paint a nuanced representation of political culture. This exploration sheds light on the transformative power of tourism explaining how it goes beyond being a leisure activity to become a silent agent in shaping the political landscape. Baghmundi District serves as an representative case study, highlighting the intertwined nature of tourism and political culture in a simple yet profound manner. This paper examines how folk culture tourism allows produces and performers to keep their trends alive through increasing revenue.

**Keyword-** folk culture, political culture, tourism, tourist comercilaiztion ,hospitality,

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of political culture involves examining the sociological aspect of political development. Ever subsequently this term was popularized by prominent American writers like Ulam, Beer, and Almond, it has prejudiced system theorists to assert distinctions between political systems. Political culture refers to historically based, broadly shared beliefs, feelings, and values about the nature of political systems, serving as a link between citizens and government.<sup>1</sup> Different countries own unique political cultures, offering insights into how and why their governments are organize, why democracies succeed or fail or why some countries maintain monarchies. Understanding our own political culture can deliver insights into shared political relationships.

The concept of political culture was first engaged by Gabriel Almond and Verba in their publication "A Study Of Political Cultures" related with five democratic countries: Germany, Italy, Mexico, the United Kingdom, and the United States. According to Almond and Powell, individual orientations involve three component, 1) Cognitive orientations, 2) Affective orientations, 3) Evaluative orientations.<sup>2</sup>

There are three basic types of political culture that can describe why people do or do not participate in the political process.<sup>3</sup>

I. Parochial Political Culture: In countries like Mexico, citizens are mostly uninformed and unaware of their government, showing little interest in the political process.

II. Subject Political Culture: In a subject political culture, found in countries like Germany and Italy, citizens are somewhat informed and aware of their government, occasionally participating in the political process.

III. Participatory Political Culture: Similar to the United Kingdom and the United States, citizens in a participatory political culture are informed and actively engage in the political process.

A brief political history is crucial for understanding the origins of Purulia district. Earlier it was known as the Manbhum district of Bihar, a part of the vast Jungle Mahal district. Nevertheless in 1956, the district underwent a transformation becoming Purulia as part of West Bengal, marking its establishment as an administrative unit.<sup>4</sup>

To explore into Purulia's roots, we must revisit the history of Jungle Mahal, an extensive region encompassing Bardhaman, Birbhum, Bankura, Midnapore, Panchet, and more. This area was strategically significant for maintaining

law and order and curbing uprisings by zamindars. The Jungle Mahal district, including present-day Purulia, emerged as part of the vast jungle expanses. The tribal communities in Purulia, consisting of groups like Ghatwals, Mundas, Santals, Bauris, Bhumijis, Majhis, Kheria Sabars, and Mundas, were economically disadvantaged, often living below the poverty line, largely illiterate, and predominantly landless laborers.

The British government's primary motive was revenue collection and the establishment of an administrative framework for protection and control over the community. In 1805, a small military base was set up in Jungle Mahal, but the British administrative intent didn't endure. By 1832, disturbances escalated, culminating in the famous Ganga Narayan-led revolt, challenging British authority. Ganga Narayan rebelled against the arbitrary power of the British, launching the Chuars' movement against East India Company rule in 1769, 1771, 1783, and 1798.<sup>5</sup>

Recognizing the inadequacy of the Jungle Mahal district, the British government abolished it in 1833, forming Manbhum, which was later divided into Purulia and Gobinda Pur. The Southwest Frontier Agency assumed control, focusing on revenue collection and civil and criminal justice.<sup>6</sup>

The political landscape of Purulia continued to evolve during British India. The district actively participated in the freedom struggle, with political conferences and movements shaping its narrative. In 1928, a political conference in Ramchandrapur set the stage for the district's involvement in the non-cooperation movement. The Quit India movement in 1942 witnessed Purulia joining under the leadership of Lok Sevak, resulting in numerous arrests and incarcerations.

#### **Objective:**

The study's central focus lies in examining how Purulia's political culture transitioned from a parochial to a participatory one through tourism. Once termed Jangalmahal during the British era, the region defied complete British control, leading to the establishment of a military base at Jhalda. This transformation reflects the resilience and dynamism of Purulia's political history, shaped by the intricate interplay of local dynamics and broader historical forces.

## **2. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

In this study data have been collected from both primary and secondary sources. The sources have been structured in an proper manner for analysis encompassing both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Secondary data has been collected from various sources including administrative agencies and different publications. Primary data has been acquired through surveys.

## **3. RESULTS**

All the voters in the Baghmundi district of Purulia demonstrate a keen awareness of the influence of tourism on politics. People actively participated in Lok Sabha and Panchayat elections. In contrast to other districts in West Bengal, there was no incidence of political violence during or after the polls. The folk culture plays a significant role in understanding the importance of tourism in the Baghmundi district of Purulia

## **4. DISCUSSION**

In the era of globalization, numerous rural areas are losing their cultural value, including folk culture. Its decline is closely linked to economic progress. The so-called old folk culture, which once satisfied the everyday demands of village inhabitants, is no longer deemed necessary. Folk customs and skills are falling out of use and are preserved only fragmentarily. In their place, commercialized folk culture, as seen in Baghmundi, has emerged.<sup>7</sup>

The recent revival of folk culture has led to a rapid return of rural people to their roots, but unfortunately, this resurgence is mainly in the form of commercialized folk culture used as a tool for tourism promotion and aimed at the improvement of the region. In rural areas, apart from natural value, folk culture resources are the main tourist attraction.<sup>8</sup> The commercialization of folk culture resources under the influence of tourism is determined by many natural, historical, and socio-economic factors. In different regions, they have varied meanings, and it is common that one determinant dominates and undermines the importance of the others.<sup>9</sup> Among the most important factors are the richness of the natural environment, progress, the activity of craft and tourism institutions, the traditions of using folk culture in tourism, and the intensity of tourism.

Since 2011 to the present, folk tourism has developed in the district of Purulia in the Baghmundi block through various mechanisms. This mechanism has various stages. The entire process of commercializing folk culture under the influence of tourism starts with the tourist's interest. At a prior stage, the resources of folk culture function as relicts or modernized old folk culture. When the interest of tourists appears, the resources become tourist values and then tourist attractions, parallel with infrastructure development.<sup>10</sup> The last stage of the process is the stage of the tourist product, marketing. This leads to a commercialized folk culture that can have a dual character, either commercialized authentic or commercialized artificial<sup>11</sup>. This stage of folk tourism has been using local guides in Baghmundi block since 2011, and it has also developed folk tourism.

Now, let's explore into how humans play an important role in folk tourism. The role of humans in the tourism space is very varied. they are creators, consumers (tourists), stimulators of the choice of space, and finally, inhabitants<sup>12</sup>. In the space of folk tourism, the most crucial is the inhabitant. As the host of the space, he/she represents it by creating an appropriate hospitality formula and, ultimately, a hospitable space. Hospitality plays a fundamental role in the space of folk tourism and determines tourism development<sup>13</sup>.

The space of folk tourism does not exist without humans and their skills; they become the main reason for tourist arrivals, leading to the development and transformation of cultural heritage. The inhabitants, mainly folk artists, are the actors of the tourism space<sup>14</sup>.

In the heartland of West Bengal deceits the entrancing Purulia district, a place where history, culture, and nature converge. Burrowed among the undulating hills and verdant landscapes, Bagmundhi district of Purulia has emerged not only as a tourist haven but also as a substance for shaping the political culture of the region.

Tourism frequently seen as a mere recreational activity, goes beyond the surface leaving a lasting effect on the socio-political fabric of a community. In the case of Bagmundhi district of Purulia, the arrival of tourists has become a force for positive change, prompting the local political dynamics.

One of the significant ways in which tourism shapes political culture is by fostering a sense of community pride. As visitors explore the rich cultural heritage of Purulia locals begin to appreciate their origins on a deeper level. This shared pride creates a common ground for community engagement, encouraging residents to actively participate in local politics.

The vibrant festivals and traditional performances (Folk dance) that attract tourists to Purulia also play a essential role in shaping the political narrative. These cultural showcases serve as a reflection of the district's identity fostering a collective awareness among the people. As tourists join in the revelry, they become part of the local story, contributing to a sense of unity that transcends political affiliations.

Tourism acts as a link between different communities within Purulia, breaking down barriers and fostering cross-cultural understanding. When individuals from diverse backgrounds come together to explore the region they bring with them a numerous of perspectives. This cultural exchange has the power to dismantle defined notions and biases, fostering an environment of tolerance and acceptance.

The economic impact of tourism cannot be understated when examining its influence on the political culture of Purulia. The revenue generated from tourism boosts the local economy, providing resources for community development. As infrastructural improvements take place locals witness perceptible benefits, leading to a more positive perception of governance and political leadership.

Moreover the tourism industry creates employment opportunities, empowering the local workforce. This economic empowerment translates into a more politically aware and active citizenry as individuals become stakeholders in the development of their community. In turn this active engagement contributes to the shaping of political discourse and decision-making.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, tourism in Bagmundhi district of Purulia is not just about picturesque landscapes and cultural spectacles, it is a powerful force molding the political culture of the district. By fostering community pride encouraged cross-cultural understanding and fueling economic development., Tourism is playing a fundamental role in shaping a more vibrant and engaged political landscape in Purulia. As tourists continue to explore the hidden gems of this district, they unconsciously become agents of positive change leaving behind a legacy that extends far beyond their brief sojourns.

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