

Abstract

Oral Tradition and Historiography of Jharkhand: A Model study of the Folk Lore and Folk Art of Santhal Pargana Region

Prof. Rajiva Kumar Sinha
Department of AIHC & Archaeology,
T.M. Bhagalpur University, Bhagalpur-812001

There have been differences in the nature and quality as well as quantity of historical writings in different ages and among different peoples of the world. These differences have been often ascribed to the 'Historical consciousness' of a particular society. In the Indian context scholars have agreed that the Indians lacked historical sense and that Indian history writing has mostly followed the format and pattern of the west or borrowed models from societies such as ancient Greece and China. The antiquity of writing in India is no doubt a controversial topic. The Indians themselves had classified their early literature as *Shruti* (hearing) and *Smriti* (remembering). Historians writing on India are thus faced with the problem of realistic reconstruction of past events.

The crux of the problem of Indian historiography thus lies in the absence of an organised system of recording. The same is true with the historiography of Jharkhand where majority of the population is still illiterate and where tribes still inhabit many parts. Absence of written records is thus quite natural. But as we all know 'being unwritten does not mean being unknown'. What therefore is required is that besides 'externalised history' based on ancient literary works, archaeological and epigraphic evidence medieval historical works and British records and documents we will have to work on the "embedded" forms such as the *Folk lore* and the *Folk art* from which historical consciousness has to be prised out. The present paper focuses on these issues with special reference to the Santhal Pargana region.

Speaker's CV

Dr. Rajiva Kumar Sinha is a professor in the Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology at T.M.Bhagalpur University, Bhagalpur, Bihar. A well known scholar in the field of art and culture, Dr. Sinha has published a number of books and research papers. His major works are *Geographical Factors in Early Indian Economy* (2002), *Manjusha Art: Reflections in Folklore, Trade and Regional History* (2012), *Studies in History and Archaeology of Vikramasila Mahavihara : The Last Beacon of Buddhist Philosophy* (2015). His research works focus the land of Bihar and Jharkhand in early Indian history. At present, he is working on folk elements in Buddhism in eastern India from 550C.E. to 1200 C.E.