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WORLD ANTHROPOLOGY CONGRESS-2023

BHUBANESWAR, INDIA | 9-14 AUGUST 2023

**CTD: 12EA- ECOLOGY, ADAPTATION AND EVOLUTION
SUB-DOMAIN: ECOLOGICAL ADAPTATION OF NOMADIC, SEMI-NOMADIC AND
INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES WITH REFERENCE TO THEIR ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE
SYSTEM**

**PANEL TITLE:
TRIBAL CULTURE AND ECOLOGICAL CONSERVATION**

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CO-CONVENOR: DR. T NEISHONING KOIRENG**

ABSTRACT

The heterogeneity of different facets of the tribal society has always been the centre of human curiosity and study. Since ancient times, the tribal groups have followed animism, nature being their primary source of worship. The fact that the relationship between tribal life and nature along with their lifestyles and socio-cultural beliefs have been depicted in a prejudiced, biased, and intolerant manner, is a matter of concern. From the time of the colonial regime, their identity and distinctive cultures have been under attack. One of the many pivotal uniqueness of the tribal culture is that their tradition is oral. Many tribes never developed a script, and this has threatened loss of their literary creativity. Some of these indigenous dialects are on the verge of extinction and it is feared that therefore, their traditions, customs, cultural practises, and knowledge systems would also be lost. In recent years, global civilization is struggling with many natural and man-made disasters. Global warming, landslides, deforestation, excessive rainfall, drought, and early or late climate cycles have become recurrent events. Most of these communities have survived confronting these disasters. They have developed invaluable knowledge traditions that are transmitted for generations only through folklores and other forms of oral traditions. The discourse on global issues of the contemporary relevance like ecological preservation, sustainable development, alternative development paradigms have a lot to learn from this vast storehouse of endangered knowledge. We know the impact of anthropogenic factors that have created unsustainable so-called developed world. We must draw lessons from the kind of synergies these tribal communities developed with nature and have learnt to live in harmony with the biosphere. These cultural traditions often regard all forms of life including that of the wild and domestic animals along with their deities as their clan members. The tribal clans are also known by the name of various plants and animals in the form of totemism. These animals and plants also hold a special importance in tribal customs, practices, and traditions. The tribal population are most qualified conservationists and have been managing their ancestral land for generations. Their rich traditional knowledge and world views have been useful and effective in eco-restoration.

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This open panel is an attempt to explore and promote their traditional knowledge about ecological conservation and disseminate the same among the rest of the society. It invites papers that address one or more of the following research questions:

- Interconnectedness of tribal society, culture, and nature.
- Indigenous knowledge and wisdom traditions, legends, folklores, myths, and tales connected with conservation of nature.
- Types and validity of the practice of tribal culture in ecological conservation.
- Policies or plans to encourage their culture for ecological conservation.
- Discourse on biodiversity conservation and role of tribal communities.
- Notions of sustainable use of natural resources, ecological conservation, and tribal culture.
- Social institutions, rituals, belief systems and cultural significance.

Our ultimate objective is to imbibe policies to maximise resilience and thus boost societies' chance of weathering the systemic challenges that lie ahead in the uncertain world. It is also an attempt by using anthropological approach to propose a realistic assessment of the question of "role of tribal culture in ecological protection", while avoiding the extremes of naive utopias or dystopian paralysis.

Keywords: Tribal Culture –Worldviews of tribes– Ecological Conservation-Traditional Practices.

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