An investigation on pilgrims approach towards socio-cultural development through Pushkar fair, Rajasthan

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Abstract

Pushkar fair have been an integral part of social and cultural aspect for Pushakr residents. As it is worldwide famous fair, from different part of world people belongs to different religion, cast and creed come here and become the witness of this religious and mythological fair. As many people from different region and religion Pushkar fair has become the social and cultural association point. The visitor or the pilgrims who come here has different opinion regarding this social amalgam. The main aim of this study is to investigate and analyzed influence of this fair on society in respect of cultural and social development. The primary data for this study was taken through open ended interview by researcher to pilgrims.

Keywords: Fair, Social and Cultural Development, Pushakr, Pilgrims

Introduction

India is a land of fairs. Because the country in which people living so many religions are so inclined to do so and this is also the specialty of this country. There is hardly any month in our country when no fair is celebrated in any city. Since the very old time, we have been celebrating many fair. The history of fair are celebrated in India is as old as our culture. (Sharma & Gupta, 2016) There are fair for every season, for every custom for every religion for every religious place and myth. India has number of regional, national, local, religious, seasonal and social fair.
It is well known that since ancient times, mankind has been organizing fairs. It is difficult to estimate the origins of these fairs, but since human beings have been born on this earth; they have been able to save their own existence in a tried to find out the path by which they could connect with one another. (Prasad, 2009) Because man is a social creature; man needs to talk about joining one another so that his loneliness can be overcome. It can be found in love, companionship and people.

Social and cultural impact of fair

Man is a social creature; it is difficult to live for him by divining society. Therefore, the fair are considered to be a very convenient tool to bring the experience of the happiness of the society primarily and to forget the problems and problems of the world. (Rathore, 2012)

From primitive times, fairs have made major contribution in developing the country's ethnic life. Normally thefair are directly and indirectly related to the religion and customs. These fairs play an important and significant place in social life. (Gahlot, 1992) And the ethnic life remains connected to it, and the country's culture also has a close relationship. The purpose of fair is to bring innovation in life. This fair makes life worth living. Enrichment of happiness, happiness and happiness in the life of people gathered in fairs.

Ever since ancient times, there has been an important medium of communication. Through these fairs, people were gathered in one place and communicate interactively. In fairs People from different villages, people of different cultures, in the same place, got the exchange of ideas, customs and rituals. People knew and understood each other. Many new social equations were born by exchange of these ideas. (Saxena, 2014) The sections of a society got the opportunity of knowing the goodness of another society. These colorful and joyful events bind the people of one nation across various religion and religion in a strange way and provide the strength of our unity.

Review of Literature

(Prasad, 2009) explained in his book “Communication for Development” that traditional communication tool integral part of our culture and society. These traditional media are generated from our customs, belief and traditions so they have a deeper impact over the people. Traditional mass media which includes channels such as folk theatre, puppet shows, travelling story tellers, balladeers, and poet have existed long before the advent of modern mass media in
many developing countries. These far-flung networks have long been part of the culture and are highly credible and accepted by the people

(Bala, 2012) analyzed that without help of our traditional folk medium of communication today’s new means of communication cannot achieve and fill all the targets to reach their audience and convey the useful and informative messages. Not even in India other developed countries of the world like America, England and many more use traditional form of communication like puppetry, folk song etc. So according to the author in any how if we use new modern media for communication then we have to merge our traditional media to make it more impactful for better reach.

(Munjal & Juhari, 2010) analyzed in their study that our social events which are related to our custom and religion like festivals and fairs made a huge impact on the economical development on the region where they are celebrated. At the time of fairs and festivals people are more engaged in social activity they communicated with each other more that increase social bandings. These social events are also important help the people to come closer to their rituals religion by which they get inner peace.

(Kumar, 2006) described that as traditional media like folk song, folk theatre, ballads, festivals and fairs are originated from the roots of our tradition and culture so they are very close to the people and a easier way of communication in compare to other ways of medium. As other medium always faces the problem to communicate with a group which contains people of cross cultural communities but in any form of folk media minimizes these type of obstacle in a very smooth way. Affinity plays a major role during the cross cultural communication. It removes the barrier of language which can be the hurdle for communication.

Country like India where 80% of population lives in villages and towns for mass communication traditional form of media are the appropriate along with the new age media. Many features like sustainability, flexibility makes this medium a better way of communication for the present and for the coming time. As they generated from the long time back and survived from the many centuries so they consist all flavors of mode of communication.

(Prasad, 2013) explained that even in the current era where we have a number of communication mode that are well equipped and modern but these are not perfect to tell the
process of communication in a better way to sender and receiver so that they can exchange their thoughts and information properly. If a sender and a receiver belongs to different culture and society then it become more difficult to communicate but in case of traditional form of communication then it become much easier as these forms of medium are directly associated with our culture and society.

(Suresh & Sathyanarayana, 2015) explained that the biggest and largest place for purchasing, selling and advertising for the product is fairs and local small trading fairs called haats. From the many decade fairs has been the ultimate point or meeting point for the purchaser and sellers for trading. At these points from different village’s people come together for trading the goods which is useful for daily routine and for some specific purpose also. These fairs are celebrated near about the festival season because at this time the buying capacities of consumers have increased. According to the authors only India is the countries that have the fairs and festivals like this which occurs regularly and provide people for the reason of entertainment, joy, happiness and a solid reason for purchasing.

Around 48,000 small local fairs and 22000 major organized yearly by which annual sales amount has reached near about 3000 crore. Because of this transformation of fairs now a day’s small trade fairs organized in small town and local manufacturer get an opportunity to display their own products and get the reasonable and correct price. Along with festive seasons these events are also organized as per the harvest cycle so that when local farmer and villagers have enough money then they can buy the products.

(Kumar, 2012) examined the impact of traditional media like fairs and festivals. This study concludes that during fair and festivals there are so many small series of events held that brings people together. People who belong to different religion, creed and follower of different tradition meet each other and try to know about others culture. During fairs an atmosphere of joy and happiness spread in the air, people sing, dance and give gifts to each others that make their social bonding more strength full. As this occasion are the best form to expose our Indian culture and tradition so that the tourist of other countries made their plan to visit our country mainly on those days which have some fair and festival. These festive occasions are the intimate part of life and society. According to the author this events can be used to increase and spread the awareness regarding any information which can be profitable for our society. There are so many programs
which are the part of developmental process can use this media to increase and enhance their reach to the masses where new modern media can’t reach easily. If developmental policies and processes would reach their correct destination then ultimately the nation building process gets the high speed.

(Newme & Mishra, 2011) paraphrased that even though we have so many modern medium of communication but it can’t replace traditional folk media which contains the medium which originated from our culture, tradition and religion like Puppetry, air and festivals, ballad, any form of folk theatre, folklore and many more. In many rural areas of India even our traditional games are treated and used as a medium of communication. From time when India was a slave country we can easily identify the importance of folk media, at that time it was so difficult to spread the patriotism wave because of British rule but even at that time these communication medium played a major and prodigious role against the British rule and helped our freedom fighter to awaken the freedom. According to the author our old traditional media can’t present their self in the well organized and stylish way as the new medium occurs but they have the ability to reach and awake the last man of the society who is uneducated and belongs to the backward class.

Rural tribes and some other backward castes and exploited classes use these medium to raise their voice and manifest their social, political and economical necessity. If new media utilizes and use folk media as a partner not as a paragon then they can enhance their reach certainty. The main reason behind the effectiveness of folk media is that they give a message and useful information in the way that is quite familiar with them in their own style, that’s why traditional folk media always touches the mind and heart both of the receiver.

Objective

The main aim of this study is investigate and analyzed the pilgrims approach towards the socio-cultural development through the traditional fairs.

Research Question
It is very quite obvious that Pushkar fair is part of the religion and custom but is it really useful in enhancing and increasing the social and cultural development till now or it became only the marketing tool for selling the goods and product.

**Methodology**

**Study Design**

This qualitative study based on the semi-structured one to one interviews taken by the researcher from the pilgrims who have been attending the Pushkar fair from a long time and from the new pilgrims. We selected qualitative methods as we were dealing with beliefs, moral, thoughts and information about the culture and society. These one-to-one and group interviews were conducted between 15-23 Nov 2018 during Pushkar Fair.

The present study explores the overall impact of Pushkar fairs on the social and cultural development. To take in-depth knowledge and information of cultural and social environment and views of pilgrims and effected people like shopkeepers and others, we used Ethnography qualitative approach. Along with participation observation approach for the social and culture study through Pushkar fair we also scheduled one to one and group interviews.

**Selection of Participants**

For this research study, we have chosen pilgrims with different age groups as it may differ in their thoughts and perception. We have taken two age groups: one is above 40-60 and another is from 15-40. To get different opinions and views, we drew another line between the participants who are localized and visitors. For taking inputs for economical aspects, we have also taken interviews for some shopkeepers.

**Sampling Strategy**

Because of the floating pilgrims in Pushkar fair *convenience sampling* was appropriate for this study. To get a range of different opinions and thoughts, we also recruited participants on *purposive sampling*. (Pilgrims visited more than 5 times and below than 5 times, include shopkeepers, outsiders and local pilgrims, include foreign travelers)

**Data Collection**
We have created mainly four focus groups that can represent and provides the relevant data with our recognized themes.

Fig1. Category Selection of Participants
We created four following focus group. These focus group were enough to identify the relevant data that will be suitable for the objective and hypothesis of this research paper. In qualitative research after each interview you have the relevant information that gives you base that allow you to know where you can stop.

- Pilgrims visited more than five time
- Pilgrims visited less than five time
- Shopkeepers
- Foreign Traveler

**Hypothesis**

**Ho.** There is no significant impact of Pushakr fair on socio-cultural development.

**Ha.** There is significant impact of Pushakr fairs on socio-cultural development.

**Data Analysis Method**
For the data analysis part we didn’t use NVivo or Atlast.ti software we performed it manually and tried to find out the codes and make the themes according to the semi structured interviews we have taken from the different groups.

**Inductive Approach** For this research study we went through the data with inductive approach. As we have started our works from the “bottom-up, collecting and using the participants’ views, opinions and thought to build broader themes and generate a theory interconnecting the themes.

Below are the processes steps by which have created our themes

- Creating and reading the transcript
- Label words, sections and sentences(coding)
- Create categories/themes
- Labeled the themes

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![Fig3. Coding and Theme Generation](image-url)

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While we were generating the transcripts we mentioned out all the words, sentences, phrases we make them codes which were directly or indirectly related with our research study. While using open coding we put our full concentration on interviewee inputs so that we can find out the right codes and put together in on category called themes.

Fig. 4 Codes and Themes Mapping
Findings and Conclusion

It is clearly visible that ALTERNATIVE hypothesis is gets accepted that there is a significant impact of Pushkar fair on socio-cultural development of that region.

While interacting with the participants, the very clear output has come that our traditional fair like Pushkar fair has an integral part of our life and they are reflection of our culture and tradition. While discussing and taking inputs from pilgrims below findings have uncovered.

- Pushkar fair is source of spirituality and Source of enthusiasm.
- To increase the communal harmony, Pushkar fair played an important role which ultimately beneficial for communal development.
- Through this, people get an opportunity to know their religion and customs better. It is a social development tool for society which increases societal harmony.
- Along with socio and cultural development traditional fairs like Pushkar fair has made a huge and important impact on the economical development.

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