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Evanjelina Kullu · Feb 10, 2022 · 3 min read

6 ways to revive your Adivasi culture

As our lifestyle is changing rapidly due to modernization, Adivasis are finding it more and more difficult to practice their culture, whereas going towards the mainstream has become a convenient option. Since modernization usually comes at a cost of Adivasi land which has been saved up for generations for a sustainable future, it is important for everyone to assert Adivasi rights with maximum impact in the mainstream. To do so, the first step is to reconnect with our own roots.



Photo courtesy: Suneet Kumar

Here are the six ways which will help us to gain a grip on our identities which have been tried to erase, as our cultures don't comply with the idea of exploitation and hoarding.

1. Learn your language

Language is the soul of any community. Adivasi languages are more than words along with it's phonetics, usage in sentences, and it's meaning. Since Adivasi cultures are nature-based, languages are everything about being in nature while you interact with your community. For instance, the Kharia language has names for small and big rivers. As we know the vocabulary of a particular language evolves with the requirement of a community in their day-to-day activities, having jargon for both the rivers means they needed to classify due to the community's involvement with the river. Learning languages these days has become easy due to the emergence of various platforms like Trilingo and YouTube, which cater to the young Adivasi masses who want to reconnect to their roots.

2. Learn your history

We have read about the Jalianawala Bagh massacre as one of the grave massacres of Indian history, but the Maangarh massacre being even bigger was never mentioned in the history books. Adivasis being the most rooted people due to their sensibility towards the land and their surroundings, such instances of Adivasi history being disparaged making a dent in one's dignity with a feeling of rootlessness needs to stop. Hence, making use of the easy accessibility to the online market by availing history books anytime is the best one can do on an individual level.

3. Learn the folk tales and art forms

Adivasis documented their ways of life using an oral form of narration since the beginning. Folk tales are a big part of oral tradition, which has given birth to different art forms narrating the stories as well. These fables not only helps one connect with their culture and traditions but provide a comfortable space where one can connect with their mystical side. The peculiar art forms practiced in different communities are important for these expressions. Another way to learn is to host family gatherings often to have engaging discussions about folk tales, art forms, and mythical creatures your ancestors might have encountered!

4. Join or create Adivasi groups

Adivasis face immense challenges in the mainstream when out for education or work. In a space filled with challenges of extreme competition and casteism, they often become a victim of identity shaming and cheating due to inexperience. Hence, it is impertinent to use social media for information exchange and moral support. Due to the booming of the internet era, it is even easy to create or join such groups which can constantly help each other out, especially when away from the community.

5. Write or document your experiences

It can be challenging for Adivasis having to learn mainstream ways to sustain their livelihood along with practicing their culture. Hence, in a time when they are bound to stay away from their land, every little cultural practice they do is of utmost importance. In a constantly changing world, these experiences in the different backdrop can be of guide to someone in future, like our ancestors left us guides to well-being.

6. Practice farming, foraging, and house-building with your family and neighbours

This way of reviving Adivasi culture is a key to letting the pass down of generational knowledge, which is the right of every Adivasi in this world. The ways of farming, foraging, and house-building are unique to every community depending on the terrain they live in. These ways are synonymous with paying respect to the land which is the most important practice of Adivasi religion irrespective of the community.

Inspiration: Life experiences and wonderful books written by indigenous authors.

About the Author: Evanjelina Kullu is from Odisha, who is currently exploring her Kharia, Mundari, and Oraon roots. She is a graduate of NIFT Mumbai. Besides dealing with her identity crisis, she is working on her fashion label 'Singi Turo'.

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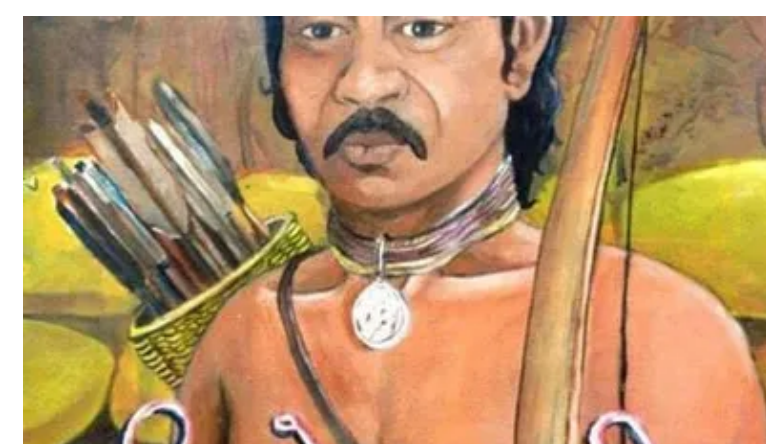
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