

Tools of Communication vis-à-vis Culture and Religion: Nuakhai the Religious Culture of Western Orissa Penuakhai the Religious Culture of Western Orissa People: a Case Study
ARPITA SABATH, SANJUKTA DAS AND SMT KANKA LATA SAMAL

GOVT WOMEN'S COLLEGE, DHENKANAL,

KET's Vaze College of Arts- Mumbai

Email Address: arpita_sabath@hotmail.com

Abstract: The number of tribes that reside in Orissa is the highest anywhere in India. They are also the most backward in the economic ladder of Orissa. Different tribes have different culture, traditions, language and rituals. Various tribes engage in different occupations, but most are either into agriculture, fishing or hunting. Nuakhai is the agricultural festival of the tribal people. It is culture of the tribal dominated area of Western of Orissa. It is a festival for the worship for food grain. It has its best celebration in Western Orissa. Nuakhai is observed to welcome the new rice of the season. It is observed a panchamitithi (the 5th day) of the lunar fortnight of the month of Bhadrapada or Bhaadara (Aug-Sep) the day after the Ganesh Chaturthi festival. It is a social festival of people in Western Orissa. Thus the study explains the ancient origin and current significance of Nuakhai as most important agricultural festival which played a major role in promoting agriculture as a way of life. Nuakhai is now celebrated as a symbol of sambalpuri culture and heritage. Nuakhai is the occasions were tribal people dedicated their first food grain of the year to their deity to get Her blessing. The rituals of Nuakhai are first observed at the temple of the reigning deity of the area or to the village deity. Afterwards the people worship in their respective homes and offer rituals to their domestic deity Lakshmi (the deity of the wealth) there after follows the Nuakhai Juhar, which is the exchange of greetings with friends, well-wishers and relatives. This symbolizes unity. Objectives are to discuss the historical and social cultural background of tribal festival Nuakhai in Western Orissa, to justify Nuakhai as the religious culture of people in Western Orissa, to highlight the significance of Nuakhai. The study is Descriptive in nature. It is based on interview method, observe method and Group discussion. The findings will help the researchers to make studies & to find out the similarities and uniqueness of other communities in their food culture and socio economic background. Nuakhai is a cohesive and unified force between people of the Western Orissa living in India as they unite and celebrate together in the occasion of Nuakhai. The modern Nuakhai festival now being observed on the fifth day of the second fortnight of Bhadrava, was unquestionably given a new look of homogeneity and uniformity by various serial organizations of western Orissa. Nuakhai is still an occasion which endorses the patrimonial nature of the sambalpuri culture and society.