



***KĀLISĪ* AS A FOLK RELIGIOUS MEDIUM: A PSYCHO-HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF SPIRIT POSSESSION IN ODISHA**

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Abstract

Kālisī folk belief in Odisha is a special psycho-historical ideology primarily ingrained in the Shakta cultural and the religious lifestyle of the state. The Kalisik phenomenon is based on the cult of great goddesses, such as Kali and Durga, and the spiritual possession, the trance, and mystic-like behavior that is interpreted as the divine revelation. According to the narratives linked with the worship in well-known Shakta Peethas and village shrines, people generally belonging to underprivileged groups are suspected of being possessed by the goddess, as they convey divine warnings, messages and blessings through being mediums. The *Kālisīs* resort to hysterical rituals, which involve mad dancing, fasting, and symbolic behavior using sacred items. The music containing rhythms, sacred singing, and tantric rites frequently provoke the beginning of their possession states. Kalisī traditions have historically been attributed to the Vamaachara (left-hand Tantric school) tradition and related to Yogini of worship that came to be embodied by sixty-four divine forms that have their origins in eight major goddesses. The Kalisīs have achieved a central role in supporting and propagating Shakta faithful, particularly in tribal and rural population groups. The difference in the Kalisī practices is also found within the Odisha and these practices have evolved in to different types which include the *Patau Kālisī* (associated with difficult devotional practices), the *Adivasii Kālisī* (as practiced by tribal villages), the *General Kālisī* (used by the village women) and the *Baradi Kālisī* related with prophecies and rituals). The *Kālisī* tradition, by combining the dramatic rites with the divine agency, stands out as a good example of the overlap of spirituality, psychology and historical continuity.

Keywords: *Kālisī, Shakta Peethas, Vāmāchāra, Yogini Worship, Pāṭuā, Ādivāsī, Barādi,*

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Introduction:

Kālisī veneration in Odisha Shakta traditions represents a vital spiritualism, which is based on a trance, rite, and folk religion. Kalisi is not only a god, but also a strong item of divine possession, transformation and continuity of cultural heritage. The identity of Kalisi differs across regions, either she is a servant (*dasi*) of the goddess; or a bride, a warrior (*Thakur*), or a divine incarnation. The ones whom Kalisi has caught in dreams or spiritual experience are said to be chosen by the goddess and she may well lead them on a lifelong path of devotion. Trance possession and body changes are a common feature of Kalisi worship, which falls between Durga and Kali Puja, with violent performances featured by wearing black, applied sindura, kajal and carrying of ritual weapons. The possessed reaches ecstatic experiences characterized by trembling, wild dancing and other consciousness altered states by holding the stick in hand (*danda*) and become channels of divine forces. Such a blend of folk mysticism and the tantric practice is a specific expression of the Shakta Bhakti. The *Kālisī* is primarily adhered to the Vamachara Tantra path of worship and aims at attaining spiritual liberation through the adoption of extremes of emotions as well as the dissolution of opposites. The practitioner is transformed into a carrier of Shakti and removes fear, as well as seizes devotionness. Other researchers also associate the practice of *Kālisī* cult to Yogini Sadhana, indicating that *Kālisīs* represent the power of Yogini and motherly divinity that transforms and protects (Bihari, 2020).

Historically, the worship of the Yogini commenced around 7 th -8 th centuries CE and expanded to 64 Yoginis with different aspects of Shakti being represented. These customs were assimilated as local beliefs, creating the foundation of the Grama Devata worship, in which Kalisis were transformed into spiritual beings and performers and relayed divine messages in the form of possession and ritual(White, 2003).

By the 15th-16th centuries *Yogini* cult had more of a village focus, and Kalisis were regarded as keystores of esoteric knowledge and were a frequent deity of cults of *Kaula* and *Yogini*. Their act of in the festivals turned out to be a living performance of myth, moral authority, and divine dialogue with the major Odishi regions along the coastlines to tribal interiors particularly during a ritual in journeys and seasonal festivals. The deity ownership is a spiritual effect wherein the Kalisi is the living image of the goddess of a god holy period (Bihari,2020).



Review of Literature:

Reviewing a phenomenon that is intertwined with the reassurance that culture, psychology, and ritualistic traditions is interdependent, the Kalisi possession phenomenon in Odisha have a reflection in many academic bases of studies, which focus on folk religious practices and worship of goddesses.

In *Folk Traditions and Goddess Worship in Odisha*, Das (2010) provides a preparatory insight on the regional diversions in the folk activities associated with goddess worship, especially with the Odisha. The author puts special emphasis on symbolic role of costumes, ritual instruments, and flowers that are so important in terms of Kalisi possession. The piece gives a rich cultural context and explanation of Kalisi as a vivid folk tradition that was deeply rooted in the Odisha spiritual world.

In his article, *The Cultural Dynamics of Possession Rituals: A Study of Tribal Folk Religion in Eastern India*, Mohanty (2015) explores psychological intensity and social-cultural aspects of possession rituals among tribal communities. He recognizes possession not as a religious experience but as an act of performance that directs the reaffiliation of community identity, social order and communication with the divine. Such view comes in handy especially in interpretation of the elevated levels of ecstasy and symbolic conduct as well as spiritual messages presented via the Kalisi.

In his book *Goddess Cults and Rituals in India: A Historical and Psychological Perspective*, Roy (2012) offers a historical and the psychological vantage point to the discussion of the way Shakta traditions have evolved in India. The origins of goddess-focused rites are talked about by Roy and their evolution. His observations of the subconscious drives and archetypes as well as the collective psyche of a goddess possession is involved in the psycho-historical perspective of the Kalisi phenomenon and throws light on the manner in which historical continuity and psychological experience converge in the practices of folk religion.

Singh and Panda (2018) offer an ethnographic narrative in *Trance and Possession States among Folk Deities of Odisha*, which discuss the process of people going into a different state of consciousness during the performance of rituals. What is disclosed in their study is the fact that trance is not just accepted but encouraged as a culturally approved way of divine contact. Existing as a possessed being, the Kalisi parallels most of the acts recorded in this study, violent expressive acts, symbolic speech and divinatory acts as a direct conduit of divine agency.



In *Possession and Identity in South Asian Religious Practices*, Taylor (1999) looks at possession as a process in which personal and cultural identity are negatively negotiated. He suggests that ritualistic practices of possession are channels whereby marginalized viewpoints, especially of the oppressed persons or groups (women), are given voice. This paradigm adds to the insight into the interpretation of Kalisi as a spiritual figure but also as a sociocultural icon with a transformed experience that has some underlying psychological and social subtexts.

Kalisi possession of Odisha has been studied in the context of various academic fields, such as anthropology of religion, psychology of trance, Shakta theology, gender studies and subaltern historiography. The religious and socio-cultural phenomenon of spirit possession has been widely studied throughout South Asia and afterwards has offered theoretical frameworks that have come to light in illuminating on the psycho-historical aspects of the worship of Kalysis.

The early anthropological research on possession including Lewis (1971) theorized the concept of spirit possession as a socially organized phenomenon that is commonly linked to groups of individuals who are seen as marginalized especially women. Lewis presented the idea that possession can also be a kind of social protest or indirect agency in patriarchal societies. This model is extremely applicable to the traditions of Kālisī, whereby numerous mediums are produced out of socially disadvantaged castes but gain ad hoc ritual power when possessed.

Equally, Bourguignon (1973) studied across-cultural alterations of consciousness and has shown that trance is never pathological, and that it is patterned in culture. Her results carry the wisdom that the Kalisi possession is carried out with a certain ritual grammar as opposed to being a psychological abnormality. The book by Erika Bourguignon supports the thesis that the ecstatic behavior in Odisha should be perceived in the ecological context.

The sociological insight into the nature of possession was further enhanced by I.M. Lewis (2003) who postulated that the "cultures of possession" give the marginalized individuals an official arena of authority. With the Kamilisian mediums, this redistribution of symbolic power is manifested in the shift of socially marginalized people to the role of spokespersons of the deities.

Psychologically, Rouget (1985) distinguished between trance and ecstasy and discovered the place of music, rhythm and ritual in the process of trance and ecstasy production. The



application of drums, including dhol, ghumura and madal in Kalaisi worship, resonates with the findings of Rouget about using sound as a trigger of the trance.

In Indian religious studies, Kinsley (1986) offered the foundation of analysis of Hindu goddesses, especially, Kali, Durga, and Chandi. His view of ruthless goddesses as manifestations of the transformative and destructive energy of the cosmos provides theological predilections in that Kalisis embodies Shakti. On the same note, Kinsley (1997) has deepened on the Tantric goddesses traditions, placing Yogini worship in the context of wider Sh study in theology.

White (2003) was investigating the cults of Yoginis and Tantric practices that he has documented the medieval origins of these practices, and the technologies. His discussion about Yogini cults in Odisha gives a historical foundation to the development of Kalisih traditions out of the previous esoteric cults in goddess adoration.

The article by Urban (2003) explores the transgressive symbolism and embodiment of rituals in Tantra, and the tradition of the Vāmācāra, which urges the extremities of emotion and the inversion of rituals. The present scholarship provides a context for Kalaksi possession in Tantric liberation contexts by means of embodied experience.

McDaniel (1989) researched the subject of ecstatic religion in the Bengal region and was able to establish how devotional intensity leads to bodily effect which can be seen as divine possession. Her work is allied to those of Kalisi, whose trance-performances finish in physical metamorphosis, through the emotional devotion.

In her work about North Indian goddess possession, Erndl (1993) mentioned her argument that the use of the body by women gives it a place of divine power and authority in morality. Such gendered aspect is echoed in the Kālisī mediums whose possession momentarily reorganizes gendered order.

Chaudhuri (2011) discussed the Shakta ritual performance in Eastern India, where the worshipping of goddesses in the tribes has been passed into the mainstream practices of Hinduism. His work proves the thesis that Kalisi is syncretism between folk and classical traditions.

As another Odisha-specific work, Eschmann, Kulke, and Tripathi (1978) captured the traditions of regional goddesses and how they became a part of Jagannath culture. Their studies place the worship of goddesses in villages in the context of the larger history of regional religion.



Kulke (1993) reviewed the issue of state formation and regional cults in Odisha with a strong focus on the importance of local god in the process of politicizing and strengthening the culture. The interpretation of kalisi possession can be explained on the basis of strengthening community identity and sacred legitimacy.

Jena (2022) examined the Odish tribal religion by focusing on spirit possession as a mediator practice between human beings and gods. His ethnographic evidence reinforces the psycho-social explanation of Kālisī as integrator of the community.

Mohanty (2009) addressed traditions of ritual performance among the rural Odishi, referring to such theatrical-religious performances as Danda Nata and Thakurani Yatra in which possession has a central role. This is directly related to the role of Kalisi in the festivals of seasons.

In a historical perspective, Lorenzen (1995) investigated the emergence of Tantric sects and the transformation they went through through ages. His work throws light into how the Yogini worship took the nature of localized gods.

Eliade (1964) studied the shamanism and the archaic methods of reaching the ecstasy state, and he believed that in trance, one could speak to the sacred and profane worlds. Culturally different, his theoretical model is useful to understand Kālisī possession in terms of organized sacred mediation.

Liminality and *communitas* were brought up by Turner (1969). Kalaisi trance conditions form liminal ritual space in which normal hierarchies are lost, shared unity is multiplied.

Obeyesekere (1981) explained possession and personal symbolism in South Asia focusing on the combination of individual psychological narratives and cultural archetypes. This psychoanalytic perspective brings to the fore the interpretation that Kalalisi possession was culturally mediated catharsis.

Tambiah (1990) has studied the efficacy of rituals and performative symbolism where he argues that the speech and gesture in a ritual create a social reality. This performative ability is contained in the prophetic utterances of Kalisiber mediums.

All of these interdisciplinary compositions prove that the belonging of the Kalaisi is neither superstition nor isolated folk. It is a stratified psycho-historical culture conditioned by Tantric theology, Yogini cults, tribal religiosity, gendered embodiment and group ritual practice.



Methodology (Field Visit):

The study uses the field visit approach to investigate the folk-belief system of various regions such as coastal to hill under a psycho-historical approach. The first method is by directly getting into or being part of the ritual setting by observing and communicating with the performers, participants as well as the locals. Massive field works in ethnography were conducted at major places where such kalisi performances and relevant religious practices occur.

The information has been collected by at least participant observation and in-person interviews and unstructured conversations with the performers, priests, devotees, and the local historians. It was meant to reveal the psychological aspects involved in the ritual practices, beliefs and experiences of the participants, and put them into cultural and historical perspective. Through this method, one is able to gain a finer insight into how the traditional folk-beliefs are still going on to influence and get influenced by individual and collective consciousness through the years.

Objectives:

1. To document the rituals, practices, and symbolic expressions associated with Kalisi possession.
2. To study the psychological states and experiences of individuals during Kalisi possession.
3. To trace the historical evolution and cultural significance of Kalisi worship in Odisha.
4. To examine the relationship between Kalisi folk beliefs and the broader Shakta tradition.
5. To understand how Kalisi practices influence community identity and social dynamics in local contexts.

Types of *Kālisī*:

Kālisī possession in Odisha is a very rich and complex tradition that is deeply rooted in the local Shakta and folk belief system. Although no generally strict division can be made, we can more or less divide among the participants of ethnographic studies and region observations and classify the practices of Kalisi according to their functions, role and context.

The most frequently observable is the Ritual Kalisi also referred to as Karma *Kālisī* in which possession takes place during certain religious festivals or ceremony performances. They are Danda Nata, Ghanta Patua, Ghata Kalasi Yatra, Ranapa Dance and Thakurani Yatra. Here, the Kalisi is a living voice of the goddess where the voice of the goddess is used in trance



to bestow blessings, pass divine will, or dramatize mythological scenes. They are generally performed in the courtyards of temples, village mandaps or sacred forest groves and therefore, form an important part of shared religious life(Bihari, 2020).

The other form this is the Oracular *Kālisī* or *Bhabishyabakta Kālisī* the spiritual seer or diviner, particularly when there is a sense of uncertainty or suffering in the collective. Whenever issues are brought on crop failures, natural disasters, epidemics, or local conflicts, the Kalisi, in his trance, utters oracular messages that are perceived to be of a direct revelation of the deity. In many cases, such messages are read and relayed to the community by the help of ritual specialists or village priests(Mishra,2020).

The Healing *Kālisī* or *Arogyadayini Kālisī* are socially religious since they possess the powers to heal physical, psychological and spiritual disorders. The Kalisis are considered to cure spiritual ownership, mental anguish, sterility and malady. The world of healing rituals can be trance diagnosis, ritual whipping, broom-touching, or the use of herbs in the possessed condition. It is widespread in tribal and rural society especially because the traditional healing is considered very important since the community has little access to the modern medical facility(Bihari,2020).

A more violent and most dramatic form is the Warrior *Kālisī* or *Veerabhava Kālisī*; he has the martial and destructive side of the goddess. These *Kalisis* are characterized by violent trance dances that involve use of ritual weapons like sticks, swords or tridents. They tend to feature cosmic conflicts between heavenly powers and demons in their performances which display archetypes of warrior goddesses such as Hingula, Mangala as well as Chandi(Bihari,2020).

There are others that are related to an esoteric and mystical Islam, which constitute a group called Yogic *Kālisī* or *Tantrika Kālisī*. They are generally referred to as Yogini worship and Tantric cults, and are supposedly able to have the yogic power (siddhis) and a strong spiritual relationship with the 64 Yoginis or Matrikas. There are long-term spiritual training, fasting, and rites of initiation of such Kalisis. They are even perceived to be living goddesses or semi-renunciates and are worshiped due to his spiritual insight and divine presence(Bihari,2020).

Some communities have the hereditary role of *Kālisī* in which the position is passed on through generations within families. These Familial or Bamsha Kalisis are regarded as ordained by the family deity, and are purported to be perpetuating the family spiritual responsibility in divine infused power (pitru-shakti) through an inherited power. They do not go into possession



so openly as others do but are often used in family rituals at home or when the community needs the blessing of the ancestry.

Finally we have the Spontaneous or Uncontrolled Kalisi or Akaśmika Kalisi who undergoes possession without any training or initiating ritual. In many cases, dreams, emotional shocks, or unexpected ventures into sacred places are the causes of these cases. These belongings could disclose some spiritual calling that was not known. Whereas others spontaneously have possessed people subsequently adopted the spiritual functions adopted, others might just be possessed on odd cases or at a certain time (Bihari, 2020).

Local differences are also additional sources of the Kalisi tradition. Kalisis are especially prominent in Danda Nata of Western Odisha (particularly in Boudh, Kalahandi and Balangir) which is ritual austerity and dramatic spiritual performance. Kalisis are the focal point of Thakurani Yatra and Chaiti Ghoda, Rnapa Ghata Kalasi Yatra in the southern part of Odisha, or Ganjam, Gajapati, as well as various other local community drama positions. In Odishi coastal belt such as Puri and Cuttack, Kalisi possession usually attends Durga Puja and Kali Puja although trance performances occur at night and are based on strong cults of the goddesses.

The Kalisi phenomenon is a vigorous amalgamation of devotion, trance, healing, and prophecy and ritual drama, and it remains a strong tool of spiritual and communal expression throughout Odishian religious world.

Possession and Deities: There are ferocious goddesses related to Kali and Chandi as well as Sharala, Mangala, Hingula, Ugratara, and Kalisi possession. These gods are protection and wrath or fertility gods and their cult is very strong in village ceremonies. Kalisi in tribal areas is present during native ceremonies such as Dangara Puja, Tera Puja, Nua Khai, and Gha Ashta Parab with the main focus on the trance, fire-walking, and divine announcements.

Social Composition of Possession: Kalisis are frequently of the marginalized classes: Patuas, Chamars, Malis, Barikas, Dehuris, Kaibarttas, Rajaks and so on. They are not ritual trained but are still venerated in the process of possession and cross caste boundaries. Their words in trance drive the communities, solve conflicts, and indicate God will. Even Brahmins and temple priests in certain places are possessed, and this shows the egalitarian nature of the folk Shakta practice, whereby divine choice is used to override social rank.

Rituals Preparation: Preparation to possession entails spiritual discipline. A few days prior to the event, Kalisis live in austerity, fast and eat special rites foods such as arua anna,



chuda, and ukhuda. However, they do not eat food on the day of the ritual and drink of pana, which is a sacred one. This initiates the possession and it starts with shivering and finally growing to trance and godlike speech.

Cultural, Symbolic Significance: Kalisi possession is not show. It has important spiritual, psychological and social functions. It confirms the existence of the goddess, offers catharsis and empowers the voiceless. The Kalisi is the channel through which Godly justice and blessings are put into society.

Dress and Accessories: Kalisis put on old clothes during possession when looked at during the altar of goddess signifying humility and piety. They carry canes, brooms, fly-whisks, in token of the power of nature, of cleansing ceremonies and of divine power. Their necks are covered with garlands of marigold and hibiscus as the manifestations of the feminine strength. Their wild hair is an indication of freedom in the spirit and Gods abandonment. The look of the Kalisi represents change and dissociation with the worldly self to be a container of Shakti.

Dance of *Kālisī*: Wild Dance of the Kalisi The wild dance of the Kalisi is the climax of the ritual possession. It is improvised, barefooted, and rich in symbolic movements winking, in vehement chanted, weird words, jumping into fire, and dancing over rivers or flame. These performances indicate the presence of the goddess and are regarded as drugs or prophesies. Sometimes Kalisis shatter the pots of pana, devour fire, inhale incense, or beat the ground. The rituals may be shouts, laughter or whipping, as perceived not to be in form of violence, but purification and will of the god. The music dhols, nagars, kartals in the surrounding lead the possession making it more powerful. They are not dances but rather ritual technologies and divine energy unites with human body. Kalisi assumes the form of a voice and a body of the goddess providing messages, healing or moral correction (Bihari, 2020).

Ritual Foundation (Ṣoḍaśa Upachāra): The place is made holy by the hand of the Ṣoḍaśa Upachāra, which is a ritual of sixteen offerings, which include washing of limbs, flower offering, incense, lamps, food and chants. This spiritual cleansing makes the Kalisi spiritually aligned so as to accept the deity.

Spiritual training is done in most locations within a period of 7, 14 or 21 days, and the devotees live to stay pure, fast, sleep on the floor, bath in sacred water, and do chants. These stages make them ready as the vessels of the goddess (Mishra, 2020).



Possession Rituals and Signs: The rituals of the moment include Haribol chants, Hulahuli sounds, bells, conches, beating of tribal drums such as ghumura, madal, dhol and bheri as the moment approaches. The rhythms call the goddess and the Kalisi works: shakings, distorted breathing, flickering eyes, then fully in a trance or daiva Zavesa (immersion in divinity). During trance, she transforms into an avatar, as she has flaming eyes, deep voice, and remarkable force. Her speeches are shifts and interpreted by priests as having something to say about natural calamities, diseases or condemnations of morals. Societies do not ignore them and change their behavior based on these.

Taboos and Recovery: When interrupted by touching with an impure person, sudden silence, and incorrect offerings it is immediately ended. The Kalisi may collapse. In this scenario, the Nata Upachara is a process of mending and restoring her by chanting, making use of herbs, water, and fanning. This going back to human form is sacred as the possession itself.

Description:

The article Folk Belief: Kalisi: A Psycho-Historical Perspective examines the tradition of Kalisi possession, an elaborate and multifaceted tradition in the Odisha folk religious beliefs. Kalisi, a brand of divine possession, is a well-informed aspect of the cultural/spiritual life of many people and predominantly marginalized social groups. Such effect is something exclusive to faith, psychology and history because ritualistic manifestations and symbolic activity can help to understand deepest secrets of human consciousness and communal identity.

In terms of psycho-historical approach, the study explores the psycho-historical experiences of those who tried to be possessed, as well as their psychological feelings, and how the Kalisi-worship evolved through time in history. The psychological aspect is concerned with how belief systems might affect mental states and emotional expressions as the possessed people are exhibiting altered states of consciousness, trance and ecstatic behavior. These are extreme moments of spiritual life which are not solely individual but also highly communal to perpetuate social bonds and collective identity(Mohanty,2015).

Traditionally, the Kalisi ownership indicates the transformations of the cultural discourses and religious construct of Odisha aligning the indigenous folk ideologies with the Hindu-wide ideologies especially Shakta cult of goddesses. The study explains the origins, metamorphoses and cultural meanings of Kalisi rituals tracing their history in the socio-religious history of the area.



Furthermore, the paper identifies the use of Kalisi practices as a communication tool between the divine and community which in most cases provide prophecies and social directions to the people during festivals and ritual journeys. The incarnation of the goddess as a man brings with it a powerful spiritual and social interaction that affects local practices, social organization and the ability to withstand a community(Bihari,2020).

Overall, due to the psycho-historical approach, it is possible to have a holistic conceptualization of the Kalisi possession not only as a religious or cultural practice but a complex phenomenon influenced by psychological, historical, and social forces. This study helps in the retention of a valuable folk legacy and enhancing the understanding of global origin of the traditional mindset that still influences human experience and social life in Odisha(Mohanty,2009).

Analysis:

The folk notion of the Kalisi possession is a very interesting interlacing of the psychological phenomenon and historical-cultural processes and a dynamic interaction of personal experience and communal tradition. The psycho-historical approach to the study of the phenomenon of Kalisi possession identifies several of its main dimensions:

Psychological Among the trance, ecstasy and altered consciousness in the possessed individuals (Kālisīs), the depth of spiritual beliefs can indeed influence the mental and emotional functions intensely. Those symptoms that were observed include wild dancing, trance-like perception, speaking unrecognizable languages and uttering prophecies characterize the ability of ritual to trigger disassociative states. This implies that the role of Kalisi possession can be both as a religious expression and as culturally acceptable as a psychological process through which the people involved can debate stress, social roles and identity.

Symbolic and Ritualistic Significance: The extravagant rituals, dress, symbolic items, music and dance are the potent instruments of directing and communicating energy of the goddess. These symbolic features form a changing environment to which the self of the world is one which is crossed, and the divine presence is here. The holding serves as a breathing metaphor of submission, spiritual revival and belongingness, strengthening of common beliefs and their cultural survival(Bihari,2020).

Evolution of History: The Kalisi tradition has a long history, having developed within the easy framework of the Shakta cult of Odisha, including folk rituals with tantric and yogini cults. The



growth of the early goddesses into the sixty-four Yogin usually, as do the village deities, indicates a localization and cultural accommodation. This historical overlay reveals that the maintenance of the old spiritual traditions alongside its adaptations to the evolving social and religious landscapes have resulted in Kalisi possession being preserved.

Social and Community Impact: Kalisi possession is a form of social institution, which cuts across the individual experience offering advice, caution and social unity. The owned Kalisi is a channel, which the community receives messages about harvests, disasters and social issues of the divine nature and therefore is significant in communal decision making and resilience. The social hierarchies are also overthrown in the practice as it engages individuals belonging to the lower classes, and, in some instances, even priests and Brahmins, which means that the practices are unifying and integrative.

Connection to Greater Religious Traditions: The interaction between the beliefs of the Kalisi folk and Shakta tradition is an example of a syncretism between folk religion and classical Hinduism. This synthesis shows that the use of local cults in the process of diversifying mainstream religious sceneries adds to them, improves the breadth of spirituality within the area(Bihari,2020).

Discussion:

Analysis of the Kalisi possession in psycho-historical perspective indicates that it is a rich colouring in which there is the entwining of individual psychological experience and historical-cultural traditions. The extreme trances and ritual actions demonstrated by the Kalisii give a clue about how folk beliefs influence altered states consciousness and expression of spirituality. Those phenomena show that Kalisi possession is not just a folk approach to superstition but a culturally-established process that imparts the relation between the divine and human experience(Mishra, 2020).

Kalisi possession represents continuation and change of goddess worship in Odisha. Syncretism of the local tribal practices with the folk practices and the Shakta tantric practices also highlights the flux in religious traditions. This interaction shows that cultures change over time maintaining some of the most fundamental spiritual senses, but adapting to the emerging social dynamics(Bihari,2020).

Kalisi possession has a vital function in the social life of the community; it gives direction, prophecy and communal solidarity. The fact that people of marginalized groups were



also involved and the adoption of Brahmins or priests in some isolated cases may indicate that the tradition of the Kalisi is free of stringent social categories and creates the sense of belonging and belonging to the larger community. The object then stands out as a medium of collective expression and mending(Das, 2010).

Psychologically, the possession state offers people with a socially introduced way of showing emotions, bargaining identity and relating to the sacred. Ritualistic elements music, dance, symbols act as the inducement towards trance, divine embodiment, which show the abilities of cultural symbols in developing human consciousness(Taylor,1999).

In the correlation between the psychological experience and the historical process of the Kalisi possession, the folk beliefs turn out to be quite breathing traditions constantly rediscover the meaning of communities. Such attitude provides the respectful perception of indigenous practices as complex and relevant.

Conclusion:

The folklore of Kalisi possession is an expression of a deep collusion of the psychological, historical, and cultural aspect. Using the psycho-historical approach, it is clear that the act of Kalisi is more of a dynamic process rather than a ritual one which includes the spiritual ecstasy, cultural memory and social work. The rituals of possession hold a vivid relationship with religious background in Odisha as well as offering the psychological strength and community to the individuals and their community. The tradition is a great example of the way folk customs keep the life of spirituality and social unity, combining the old practices of goddess worshipping with new realities in society. Psycho-historical approach would give more insight to the knowledge by placing individual experiences within the wider historical and cultural framework to establish that Kalisi possession is an important and significant example of folk religiosity in terms of community welfare.Future studies can elaborate more on the therapeutic elements of Kalisi possession and its involvement in community life, which would result in holistic appreciation of folk belief systems in India and elsewhere.



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