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WOMEN'S ARE CUSTODIANS OF CULTURE: THE BANJARA EXPERTISE.

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ABSTRACT- Women's have historically played a vital role in the preservation and transmission of Banjara culture, functioning as its primary custodians across generations. The Banjara community, known for its rich nomadic heritage, vibrant traditions, and distinctive cultural expressions, relies heavily on women to sustain its social, cultural, and artistic identity. This abstract explores how Banjara women act as carriers of cultural knowledge through their everyday practices, creative expressions, and social responsibilities. Banjara women preserve cultural heritage through traditional attire, especially the iconic embroidered costumes, accessories, and textile art that symbolize community identity and history. These artistic practices are not merely decorative but serve as visual narratives that reflect migration patterns, social values, and ancestral memories. Skills related to embroidery, mirror work, and costume-making are passed from mothers to daughters, ensuring continuity of tradition within the household and the wider community.

Beyond material culture, women are central to maintaining oral traditions such as folk songs, lullabies, myths, and ritual chants. These oral forms transmit moral values, historical experiences, and collective wisdom, reinforcing cultural cohesion. Women also play a key role in performing and organizing rituals associated with birth, marriage, festivals, and religious observances, thereby safeguarding ceremonial knowledge and community norms. Socialization is another crucial domain where women act as cultural custodians. Through child-rearing practices and informal education, they infuse cultural values, language, customs, and ethical standards in younger generations. Despite social and economic changes, including modernization and migration, Banjara women continue to adapt while retaining core cultural elements, demonstrating resilience and agency.

Keywords:
Banjara culture, women custodians, cultural preservation, indigenous traditions, oral heritage, embroidery, tribal identity, women and culture.

Banjara Community

- The Banjaras are a nomadic tribal community in India.
- Found in states like Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra.
- They known for rich traditions, Vibrant clothing and their traditional songs.

Wedding Tradition Ghughra & Rituals.

- The Bride wears a heavy metal ornament **(Ghughra)** Anklets.
- In this brother of the bride plays a important role symbolizing protection and support.
- It marks brides new journey.
- Symbol of culture, blessing, identity, and tradition, Making the bride feel connected to her roots and community.

Role of Women in Banjara Society.

- Women are central to family and social life.
- Responsible for passing traditions to next generation.

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- Active in rituals, festivals and daily cultural practices.

Traditional Attire and Embroidery

- Famous for colorful dresses **Phetiya** (long skirt) and **Kanchali** (tunic/blouse).
- Intricate embroidery with mirrors and beads.
- Each design reflects identity and heritage.

Jewellery and ornamentation

- They wear Heavy jewelry like, necklaces, bangles, anklets, nose rings.
- The jewelry made from silver, coins and beads.
- These are the symbol of status and cultural pride for the banjara women.

Folk Songs and Dance

- Women preserve oral traditions through songs.
- Perform traditional dances during festivals and celebrations.

The songs reflect history, love, and social values

Handcrafts and skills

- Skilled in embroidery, weaving, and craft making.
- Handmade items like bags, quilts, and wall hangings.
- Provides livelihood and preserve art.

Festivals and Rituals

- Women lead celebrations like Teej, Dusshera, Holi, and local festivals.
- Perform rituals and prepare traditional food **Saloi , Bati, Sukhi Boti, Churma.**
- They maintain spiritual and cultural continuity.

Obstacles and Preservation

- Modernization Threatens traditional practices.
- Migration and urbanization impact culture.
- Women continue efforts to preserve identity.

Conclusion

- Banjara women are the backbone of cultural preservation.
- Their knowledge keeps traditions alive.
- Need for awareness and support to sustain heritage.
- Banjara women are widely recognized as the custodians of their community's vibrant culture, heritage, and artistic traditions.

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