



Sustainability and Sustainable Development Goals: A Select Study of the Traditions and Rituals of Odisha

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Abstract. Natural resources are vital for the planet in their given state without human intervention. When they get depleted it will lead to bigger problems such as global warming eventually leading to climate change, water scarcity, lack of proper electricity. Sustainability is truly the need of the hour, more than ever. The need to preserve and protect the resources has become vitally important. When it comes to the rich greenery and plentiful resources of the ecosystem, Odisha is undoubtedly one of the states that is exhilarating. The state is known for its diversity and variety in folklore such as dance, arts, crafts, folktales, folk performances which have a deep connection with the theme of sustainability. This paper aims to illustrate how various types of Odisha's folklore such as traditions, rituals and festivals, through their harmony with nature, educate the people about the concept of sustainability. In this paper, our aim is to highlight the role of folklore of Odisha in promoting the theme of sustainability. This this paper makes a noteworthy contribution towards the achievement of the concept of Sustainable Development Goals established by United Nations.

Keywords: Sustainability, Tradition, Ritual, Odisha.

1 Introduction

The inevitable exploitation of nature has led to the rise of several ecological problems starting from deforestation to pollution. It is eventually destroying the balance of our planet's ecosystem. Natural resources are vital for the planet in their given state without human intervention. They are crucial for our survival, but if they are consumed more than usual and get depleted it will lead to bigger problems such as global warming eventually leading to climate change, water scarcity, lack of proper electricity. Global warming is the price all of us are paying today for the exploitation of nature. Sustainability is truly the need of the hour, more than ever. The need to preserve and protect the resources has become vitally important.

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The tradition of a region is often identified by the rich tapestry of traditional beliefs, stories, customs, rituals, and practices that are passed down through generations within a specific culture or community. It serves as a repository of collective wisdom and cultural identity, transmitted orally or through various artistic forms. The elements commonly found in the tradition of a region include myths, legends, proverbs, rituals, superstitions, and other forms of cultural expression. In the context of Odisha, a state in eastern India, the vast tradition holds a prominent place in its cultural heritage. Odisha is a vibrant mosaic of ancient myths and legends, featuring prominent figures like Lord Jagannath, rituals and traditions such as *Kartika Purnima*, *Prathamashstami*, *Manabasa Gurubaar*, *Chakulia Panda* and many more. These myths, stories and traditions not just reflect the deep-rooted spirituality and history of the region but also the creativity and resilience of its people. In our paper, we attempt to examine how the rituals, traditions, beliefs of Odisha are connected to sustainability. By studying these aspects and understanding their role in sustainability, we aim to demonstrate how the traditions of Odisha contribute to achieving Sustainable Development Goals. With this demonstration, we want to encourage the practice, promotion and preservation of these folklore elements of Odisha.

The aim of our paper is to investigate the links between the rituals, traditions, beliefs of Odisha and the concept of sustainability. By exploring these aspects and their contributions to sustainability, our goal is to illustrate how Odisha's folk traditions actively contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals. Through this illustration, we aim to inspire the continued practice, promotion, and preservation of these valuable traditional elements within Odisha.

2 Objectives of the Paper

In our paper, we attempt to examine how the rich traditions of Odisha such as rituals, beliefs are connected to sustainability. By studying these aspects and understanding their role in sustainability, we aim to demonstrate how the traditions of Odisha contribute to achieving Sustainable Development Goals. With this demonstration, we want to encourage the practice, promotion and preservation of these folklore elements of Odisha.

3 Methodology

In our paper, we have gathered information about various components of the traditions in Odisha, like customs, rituals, and beliefs. We have collected this data by visiting villages of different districts of eastern coastal regions of Odisha where these traditions are practiced. The data were collected through casual conversations with local people, particularly the elderly. Additionally, one of our researchers, who is originally from

Odisha, has shared her personal knowledge and experiences to verify and analyze the collected data. To add more depth to our findings, we also consulted secondary sources such as articles, research papers, books, and archives etc. After gathering this data, we carefully analyzed and interpreted the different aspects of cultural tradition, always keeping in mind the main focus of our paper: sustainability and why it is important in today's world. The core background of our paper revolves around the concepts of sustainability and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

4 Literature Review

Mahapatra and Mahalik (2010) have discussed the long-standing traditions from our ancestors and how the knowledge is spread widely across different spheres of livelihood. The writers believe that the same indigenous traditional knowledge is vital for further development which is why it is necessary to start documenting them. The writers believe that the collection and storage of the traditional knowledge should be given more importance and priority among organizations and individuals in the society in order to pave the way to a sustainable future.

Along the same lines, Cintya (2023) in her paper has explained how traditional folklore has been seeing a decline in interest over time, leaving behind an important question as to why the younger generations are losing their interest in their traditional roots. Through her paper she has tried to revolutionize the very concept of sustainability and its importance.

Ozili (2022) has studied pre-existing research works on sustainability and sustainable development from around the world to understand the relation between the both. Through his paper, the writer enunciates that incorporating sustainable practices into the day to day lives will add to the advancement towards sustainable development in the long run.

Martin et.al (2023) have described in detail the seventeen development goals towards sustainability. The authors have discussed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in an elaborate manner with the required statistical data so that the readers get a better understanding of the need for sustainability.

In addition to the above mentioned paper Lin et.al (2017) in their paper have discussed in detail how the consistency of the Sustainable Development Goals can be kept maintained. The writers have further expanded on the significance of the goals for guiding development as rigorous accounting is vital for their consistency.

Devi (2022) has highlighted the significance of preserving the age old folk practices so as to maintain ecological restoration. The author has expressed that her work has focused on how the indigenous wisdom can be put to use to revert to contemporary ecological concerns and how the work has helped in preserving their environment by means of the folkloric approach used in the paper.

Mahapatra et.al (2023) have explained that the human society and natural environment are intertwined with each other and have always been, as observed in the day to day activities of the people of ancient civilization. The writers have tried to study the impact of eco-tourism on the livelihood of the local population of Jamuani, Odisha. The writers have tried to decipher the quality of lives of the people of Jamuani post the advancement and the development of the eco-tourism site.

Likewise, Hunter (2020) has given us a basic understanding of how the connection between landscape, folklore and ecology can be established. Through the paper the writer has studied how the impact and use of folklore in landscape interactions have the potential to contribute to environmental sustainability. Moreover, Hunter believes that education about our environment and ecology plays a major role in developing solutions for resilience against climate change and ecological degradation.

Jena (2021) has studied the selected short fictions of Shri Raghabananda Dash and Ranjan Pradhan so as to recognise the eco critical elements in them. Jena (2021) believes that the paper will bring in awareness about how culture and nature together can do wonders when it comes to restoring cultural biodiversity. The writer believes that amidst the effects of globalization, contemporary practices, technology and architecture there has to be a middle ground between both nature and culture and he has established that communion in the paper.

Similarly, Ajayi and Olatumil (2018) in their paper have studied how the Yoruba folklore acts as a potential tool for making transformative learning with regards to environmental sustainability accessible to all. Their paper has revealed that indigenous folklore plays a major role in creating a conscious and critical reflection of environmental situations as well as helps promote environmental sustainability.

5 Research Gap

There are some existing works on the exploration of the tradition of Odisha, but there are very few that explore how these elements relate to sustainability and these papers are mainly on tribal traditions. To the best of our knowledge, there is not much research on how the inherent tradition of Odisha, in general, can contribute to sustainability and help achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

6 Sustainability – History, Background and the Framework for the SDGs:

The term “sustainability” appeared first in the renowned Brundtland Report (1987) produced by several countries for the United Nations. The concept that we have labelled as sustainability dates back to 30 years ago. As stated by Brundtland (1987), sustainability is referred to as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability

of future generations to meet their own needs. The Brundtland Report is responsible for focusing on the interconnection between economic growth and environmental degradation and hence is able to identify the clear path to be taken. The two notable outcomes of the report are that it inspires the implementation of regular international conferences to review environmental progress and highlights the need for coordinated political action. It also identifies new active members in the environmental effort, including Universities, Private Enterprises, Non- Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and individuals. The recommendations laid out in the Brundtland Report were valued and in 1992, several individuals convened at the United Nations Earth Summit in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil. According to the study done by Foley (2019), one of the major outcomes of the Summit is the establishment of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), whose main purpose is to maintain the stability of the greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere. The next and the third conference also holds a lot of significance as it results in the Kyoto Protocol that aims at reducing the greenhouse gas emissions in developed countries to five percent below 1990 levels between the year 2008 and 2012.

Foley (2019) has further elaborated as to how the United Nations came together and made eight international development goals which are also called the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The goals of course include environmental sustainability but expand beyond that to simultaneously emphasize on eradicating poverty, increasing access to primary education, promoting equality, reducing infant mortality, improving mental health and combating disease. Environmental restoration still is the main focus according to Goal 7 that aimed at ensuring environmental sustainability. The goal is to cover concerns such as climate change, resource depletion, preservation of biodiversity as well as the terrestrial and marine areas. One of the most important years for global sustainability and climate change efforts was 2015. In this year, the major development was the expiration of the MDGs and the initiation of the seventeen new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The root goals or the MDGs were deconstructed into several categories in 2015, and each part was made into a separate goal which lead to the seventeen SDGs. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were established by the United Nations in September 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. They succeeded the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and were adopted by all 193 United Nations Member States. The SDGs consist of 17 interlinked global goals designed to be a framework to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address a wide range of social, economic, and environmental development issues, recognizing that these challenges are interconnected and require a holistic approach. These new goals intend to work towards clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, sustainable cities and communities, responsible production and consumption, climate action, life below water, life on land.

The specific SDGs that we have focused on in our paper are SDG 1, SDG 11 and SDG 15. SDG 1 stands for no poverty and it intends on eradicating poverty by ensuring that everyone has access to the basic necessities of life such as food, clean water, sanitation and shelter. It also aims at creating equal economic opportunities for everyone. SDG 5 stands for gender equality and it aims at providing the fundamental human right that is equality amongst all, irrespective of their gender. This goal intends on ending all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, ensuring their full-fledged participation in all the aspects of life. It also aims at addressing issues such as child marriage, female genital mutilation, and unequal access to education and healthcare. SDG 15 stands for life on land that focuses on the responsible management and conservation of the terrestrial ecosystems, forests and biodiversity. It intends on addressing issues such as deforestation, desertification and the loss of biodiversity. Through this goal, sustainable land management practices are encouraged in order to prevent soil degradation, to protect and to restore ecosystems that support the lives on land. This goal plays a pivotal role in combating climate change in the longer run. The SDGs are indeed a brave commitment to finish and execute what has already started. It is a task to tackle some of the pressing challenges the world has been posed by today. The goals are made for the overall welfare of the world, however, it is necessary to remember that they are all interconnected, meaning success in one affects success for the others. Starting with how to deal with the threats of climate change and its impacts, managing our natural resources, achieving gender equality, eradicating poverty, providing basic education and equal opportunities for all, fostering peace and reducing inequalities the goals are dependent on each other.

7 The Connection of the traditions, rituals, beliefs of Odisha with the Concept of Sustainability and SDGs:

Cultural tradition is referred to as the rich tapestry of traditional beliefs, stories, customs, rituals, and practices that are passed down through generations within a specific culture or community. It serves as a repository of collective wisdom and cultural identity, transmitted orally or through various artistic forms. The elements commonly found in the tradition of Odisha include myths, legends, proverbs, songs, dances, rituals, superstitions, and other forms of cultural expression. In the context of Odisha, a state in eastern India, its tradition holds a prominent place in its cultural heritage. These myths, stories and traditions not just reflect the deep-rooted spirituality and history of the region but also the creativity and resilience of its people. The traditional heritage of Odisha plays a major role in practicing sustainability by means of establishing an ethereal connection between people and nature. It also helps in preserving the traditional or conventional knowledge passed down to newer generations from their ancestors. As the traditions and rituals are often centered on the local agricultural techniques, day to day

sustainable lives, they help spread awareness and contribute to the overall well-being of the community and the conservation of the ecosystem. The components that we have taken for the paper are the prominent traditions, rituals and festivals etc.

One of the famous Vaishnavite traditions of Odisha is *Chakulia Panda*. In this tradition, the devotional bards roam from door to door reciting religious compositions from ancient Odia literature in their colloquial dialect. They are often dressed in saffron clothes and carry their *gamucha* as a carry bag or a *jhola*, meant to collect alms. They never really demand for alms, they eagerly receive rice and vegetables. They often sing, narrate and act in order to spread messages about the various contemporary social issues. They are seen with sandalwood marks on their foreheads, some even wear turbans and hold *Chattris* or palm leaf umbrellas to protect themselves from tropical heat and rain. The *Chakulia Panda* song is a traditional Odia folk song that has the potential to contribute towards sustainability in several ways. Ecologically, the tradition is deeply connected to nature as it often celebrates the beauty of nature, admires the lush greenery and landscapes of Odisha through its narrations. It usually emphasizes on the relation between people and their ecosystem. Many *Chakulia Pandas* also refer to agriculture and farming in their songs and these can be used as a medium to understand the significance of sustainable and eco-friendly farming practices. This tradition embodies sustainability through cultural preservation, the use of locally sourced alms, eco-friendly materials, and the oral transmission of knowledge. It also fosters community engagement and promotes voluntary charity.

Then comes the traditional art form of *Pattachitra* whose ancient origin is deeply intertwined with the state's cultural heritage. The word "*Pattachitra*" is derived from two Sanskrit words "*Patta*" meaning cloth and "*Chitra*" meaning painting. It refers to a scroll painting that is characterized by intricate details and vibrant colors. Raghurajpur, a heritage crafts village is located in Puri district, Odisha. *Pattachitra* promotes sustainability in several ways. Ecologically, this art form makes use of natural materials such as organic pigments, natural dyes, handmade paper or cloth derived from plants and the ecosystem. All of these practices minimize the use of synthetic and potentially harmful chemicals, thereby contributing to eco-friendly art production. The skilled *Pattachitra* artists are often conscious of resource conservation and they use materials efficiently leading to minimal waste. The artists often recycle their old paintings in order to make further use of the canvases and frames. These practices contribute towards the overall ecological sustainability in the longer run. Economically, *Pattachitra* is a form of artisanal production, typically created by local artists. Supporting these artists and purchasing their works contributes to the economic sustainability in rural communities, reducing the need for migration to urban areas. *Pattachitra* and the villages known for this art form, such as Raghurajpur, attract many cultural tourists. Along with preserving the traditional techniques of the art form, *Pattachitra* artists do not shy away from adapting modern market demands by creating a wide variety of products, including wall art, home decor, and souvenirs. This helps sustain or restore the art form and the

livelihoods of the artists. Culturally, this art form plays a major role in preserving and promoting Odisha's cultural heritage as they continue to practice with the traditional techniques and values. Many of the *pattachitra* paintings often depict stories from the Hindu mythology and the local folklore. These stories are not restricted to any such theme, they can convey ethical and environmental lessons, cultural stories, and can also spread awareness about sustainable living and responsible resource management.

Similarly another tradition is the art form of *Jhota Chita* that originated in the ancient rituals where it was believed to invoke blessings from deities and ward off the evil spirits. The geometric patterns, floral motifs, and mythological symbols used in *Jhota Chita* are a visual representation of the cultural narratives and beliefs passed down through generations. *Jhota Chita* is a traditional Odia art made from rice paste and with a piece of cloth tied with a stick around it. Some people also use their bare fingers to draw patterns according to the occasion. *Jhota Chita* murals can be drawn on both walls and floors. It is often confused with *Rangoli* but they are quite different from each other. *Rangolis* are made using colored powders whereas *Jhota Chita* is made with white semi liquid paste extracted from rice. This is a tradition that is followed on several occasions such as *Manabasa Gurubaar*, *Basanti*, *Raja*, *Kartika Purnima*, *Lakshmi Puja*. Some designs that are pretty common in *Jhota Chita* are those of lotus flowers, elephants, Goddess Lakshmi's feet, *swastika* sign and a lot more.

On the face of it, the *Jhota Chita* designs are made for the purpose of decorating houses on occasions but the purpose is not limited to just this. They hold a lot of significance that goes beyond aesthetics. From an ecological standpoint, *Jhota Chita* promotes sustainability by making use of natural, locally sourced materials. The primary medium that is the rice paste, is derived from Odisha's staple crops, emphasizing a connection to the region's agrarian roots. The eco-friendly and eco-conscious nature of the art form minimizes its impact on the environment and promotes the ecological footprint associated with artistic expression. Moreover, the *Jhota Chita* is often created on the ground or walls that allows easy decomposition further making a good impact on the environment. Economically, *Jhota Chita* provides opportunities for the local artisans and communities. The creation of these intricate designs takes adept craftsmanship, and the artists often survive by practicing and preserving this traditional art form. Additionally, the demand for *Jhota Chita* adds to the economic sustainability of the state as it creates a market for their unique skills. *Jhota Chita* also has a cultural inclination as it is a living representation of Odisha's rich artistic heritage and folklore. The motifs and designs carry deep cultural significance as they narrate stories of gods, goddesses, and mythological events. The practice of making *Jhota Chita* is passed down through generations that lead to their cultural restoration and preservation.

The next few customs and traditions that have been taken into consideration are *Nuakhai*, *Akshaya Tritiya*, *Bali Yatra*, *Manabasa Gurubaar*, *Prathamashanti*. Starting with *Nuakhai*, it is the quintessential harvest festival in Odisha and it involves celebrating the new crop by offering the first produce to deities. The word "*Nuakhai*" can be

translated into “*Nua*” (i.e., new) and “*Khai*” (i.e., eating). During the festival people come together and offer the first rice of the harvest to their deities before consuming it themselves. The newly harvested rice is called “*Nabanha*”. The festival represents different aspects, including cleanliness, invitation, searching for the new harvest, gifting. *Nuakhai* also represents a new beginning for many. People believe that it is time to leave behind grievances and start afresh. People exchange gifts with their loved ones, and blessings are sought from the elders. *Nuakhai* is deeply connected with sustainability in many aspects. It emphasizes the importance of sustainable agriculture practices, with farmers offering the first harvest to their deities. This ritual promotes organic farming techniques, reduced reliance on chemical fertilizers, and the preservation of indigenous rice varieties. It contributes to long-term soil fertility, minimizes environmental harm, and ensures food security in the community, aligning with the principles of sustainable agriculture. It encourages the preservation of traditional knowledge related to farming, farming techniques, food processing, and indigenous crafts. Additionally, the festival encourages the consumption of locally sourced, seasonal food.

Akshaya Tritiya is considered an auspicious festival for people of Odisha, which is observed on the third *tithi* of *shukapaksha* of *Vaisakha* month of the traditional Hindu calendar. This again an agricultural or agrarian festival and is celebrated across Odisha today with farmers performing “*Akhi Muthi Anukula*”, the ceremonial act of sowing seeds in their paddy fields after ploughing. The occasion marks the commencement of agricultural works. As per the rituals, the farmers wear new clothes and carry a decorated basket of seeds to their fields where the seeds are offered to Goddess Lakshmi praying for a rich harvest season. The festival also marks the beginning of ‘*Chandan Jatra*’ of deities at several shrines in Odisha. The construction of chariots for *Ratha Jatra* of Lord Jagannath and his siblings in Puri also starts from this day. The festival is considered to be auspicious for new beginnings like weddings, buying property, new businesses, making investments. It is believed that things that are started on this day will continue to grow and prosper. This tradition holds immense potential for promoting the dimensions of sustainability. This auspicious day often coincidentally falls on the day of the commencement of the agricultural season, making it a key event for sustainable agriculture practices. Farmers use this occasion to sow seeds. Secondly, *Akshaya Tritiya* has cultural and religious significance that reinforces cultural values and traditions. People participate in rituals such as worshipping their deities, giving away to the less fortunate, embracing many more such customs. The festival ensures the strengthening of cultural identity and promotes sustainability of age old customs and traditions. This festival also contributes to the economic sustainability by means of support for local craftsmanship. Many individuals and businesses also choose this occasion to start their projects, purchase assets and to invest in gold and other resources. It stimulates economic growth and encourages financial stability in various sectors of the economy.

Baliyatra is the testimony to the rich maritime legacy of ancient Odisha. This is the time that was and still is considered auspicious by the *Sadhabas* to begin their voyage.

It starts on the special occasion of *Kartika Purnima*. It is organized every year to commemorate the 2,000-year-old maritime and cultural links between ancient *Kalinga* (today's Odisha) and Bali and other South and Southeast Asian regions like Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Burma (Myanmar) and Ceylon (Sri Lanka). According to historians, popular items of trade between *Kalinga* and Southeast Asia included pepper, cinnamon, cardamom, silk, camphor, gold, and jewellery. The *Bali Yatra* celebrates the ingenuity and skill of those expert sailors who made *Kalinga* one of the most prosperous empires of its time.

The tradition of *Kartika Purnima* falls on the 15th day of the *Shukla Paksha* of the *Kartika* month (November). On this particular day miniature boats made out of plants, specifically bamboo stems are put up for sale outside most temples in Odisha. The devotees buy these boats and set them afloat with a small lighted oil lamp, betel leaves, betel nuts and other offerings. This tradition is called the "*Boita Bandana*." *Boita* stands for boat or ship and *bandana* stands for praying or worshipping. During the *Kartika* month, the entire Hindu population of Odisha becomes strictly vegetarian. They observe the month with auspicious customs such as abstaining from eating red meat or any kind of meat and stick to mostly eating *habisa*, continuing till the traditional ceremony of *Panchuka* which falls on the last five days of the month. The *Kartika* month ends on *Kartika Purnima*. The day after *Kartika Purnima* is called *Chhada Khai* when the devotees who had been abstaining from meat finally eat non-vegetarian food. According to Ghadei (2015), it is a day of reminiscence of Odisha's ancient overseas trade with the far off south eastern ports. It signifies the period when Odisha was earlier known as *Kalinga* and traders and mariners known as *sadhabas* traveled on the *boitas* or boats to trade with distant island nations that share borders with the Bay of Bengal like Indonesia, Java, Sumatra and Bali.

While discussing the rich culture of Odisha, it will be incomplete to not mention the pious culture of Lord Jagannath. Two of the most prominent and prevalent traditions that are interrelated with the culture are *Manabas Gurubaar* and *Prathamashanti*. *Manabasa Gurubaar* is a tradition that portrays the rich traditions and beliefs associated with Lord Jagannath. This tradition is dedicated to Maa Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity and Lord Jagannath's better half. It is observed on every Thursday in the odia month of *Margashira* (November end – December). The legend of *Manabasa Gurubaar* is based on the ancient scripture of old *Lakshmi Puraana*. Back in the day, as per the dictated social construct the untouchables were not allowed to pray, worship and follow rituals. The people who put themselves in a dignified position believed that the involvement of the untouchables in the prayer and rituals of the deities will hamper the sanctity of their religious sentiment. According to the *Lakshmi Puraana*, Shriya, a low caste woman broke the rules and went forward to worship and appease Goddess Lakshmi. This action angered Lord Balaram, the elder brother of Lord Jagannath and Goddess Lakshmi was then shown out of the door for ending discrimination and encouraging untouchables to worship and perform rituals. Goddess Lakshmi cast her

curses at Lord Jagannath and Lord Balaram and as a result the brothers had to spend a long time without food, water or shelter. Goddess Lakshmi had then agreed to go back home on the condition that there will be no discrimination. During this time women observe a fast and worship Goddess Lakshmi to seek her blessings. It is believed by the people that the goddess herself visits every household and removes pain and sorrow. There is a popular belief that Goddess Lakshmi only visits the clean houses, so all the dirt is removed and the houses are kept spick and span prior Thursdays. After cleaning the house, the women make all kinds of *Jhoti Chita* on the walls and the entrance of rooms in their houses. *Jhoti Chita* refers to drawings made with the paste extracted from rice paste. The *Jhotis* are drawn in different shapes like flowers, mainly lotus flower and the feet of Goddess Lakshmi. In the old days, women used to make *Manda Pithas* or steamed pancakes with jaggery filled inside, women laid down their *khatuli* or low tables to spread the newly harvested paddy grains and fill them in the *Mana* or a pot as an offering to Goddess Lakshmi. Even though these practices are not very relevant today, a lot of women still follow the traditions along with reading the *Lakshmi Puraana* aloud.

The festival's cultural significance is manifested in the intricate details during the rituals and customs observed during *Manabasa Gurubaar*. The devotees clean their homes thoroughly, make *jhoti chita* and these actions speak volumes about how the tradition promotes cultural sustainability. The use of traditional art forms like *jhoti chita* not only adds a cultural dimension to the festival but also supports the local artisans, contributing to economic sustainability by showcasing and preserving traditional craftsmanship. The act of using paddy and rice reinforces the agricultural roots of the festival, promoting ecological sustainability by celebrating the significance of the locally grown produce. Economically, *Manabasa Gurubaar* plays a crucial role in upholding the rural economy of Odisha. The festival involves the exchange of agricultural produce and the emphasis on locally sourced products fosters economic sustainability by promoting small-scale farmers. Additionally, people purchase decorative items, traditional clothing, and festive goods which in turn stimulates economic activity in rural and urban areas. Furthermore, *Manabasa Gurubaar* contributes to the preservation of the environment by promoting sustainable practices. The use of rice paste for *jhoti chita* is not only an artistic expression but it is simultaneously eco-friendly, utilizing natural materials without causing harm to the surroundings. These sustainable elements, engraved in the tradition of *Manabasa Gurubaar*, highlight its contribution towards the multi facets of sustainability in Odisha.

Prathamashanti is observed in the Odia month of *Margashira* or the month of December. This tradition is intertwined with the culture of Lord Jagannath as both Lord Jagannath and his elder brother Balaram receive *Podhuan Bhara* being the elder children. According to tradition, Lord Madhab of the Niali Temple is considered the maternal uncle of the triad of Puri. Thus every year, the servitors of Niali Temple offer new clothes to Lord Jagannath and his siblings during this festival. They are given lots

of offerings and are adorned with new clothes. This is a tradition that has been going on since ages and is still passing from one generation to another generation. In every Odia household, the tradition is carried out in honour of the eldest child or the *podhuan* of the family. This ritual is a form of worship for the life and prosperity of the eldest child who is offered an *arti* or a lighted lamp ovation by the mother or senior female relatives followed by the recitation of mantras. According to the ritual, a child up until he/she is married is supposed to be sent new clothes, money and whatever one wishes by the maternal uncle or *mamu* in order to pamper the eldest child. *Prathamastami* is also called *Padhuashtami*, *Enduri* or *Haldi Pithas* are made on the occasion which are steamed rice cakes with coconut and jaggery filling. This particular *pitha* is wrapped in turmeric leaves, which has many antiseptic and medicinal properties. It is believed that *haldi* or turmeric consumed at the start of winter can boost immunity from cold-related diseases.

The celebration of *Prathamastami* plays a crucial role in promoting ecological sustainability in the Jagannath culture. The festival is closely associated with agricultural practices, aligning with the agrarian roots of the region. The families often prepare special dishes using seasonal and locally sourced ingredients, fostering a sense of communion between the community and the environment. The emphasis on locally sourced produce helps in decreasing the carbon footprint in context to food consumption, aligning with contemporary sustainability practices. The tradition promotes a holistic approach to living in harmony with nature. Economically, *Prathamastami* contributes to the local economy by boosting the agricultural sectors as there is an active demand for fresh, seasonal produce and traditional ingredients surges during the festival, benefiting local farmers and businesses. Additionally, the preparation of special dishes and sweets for the occasion is at times not feasible in every family which is why they purchase the offerings from the markets. This stimulates economic activity in local markets, providing opportunities for the small-scale business owners. Culturally, *Prathamastami* plays a pivotal role in preserving and transmitting the rich traditions of Odisha's culture. The tradition acts as a cultural anchor, imbuing a sense of identity and belonging among the people of Odisha. The families pass down the tradition, recipes, rituals, and stories associated with *Prathamastami* from one generation to the next, ensuring the continuity of cultural heritage. Moreover, the festival contributes to the intangible cultural heritage of the region, attracting tourists and pilgrims from across the country. This surge in tourism not only promotes cultural exchange but also generates revenue for the local tourism industry.

The next tradition is *Kartika Purnima* that is closely associated with the renowned *Bali Yatra* as the festival starts on the day of the end of the *Kartika*(November) month which is the occasion of *Kartika Purnima*. *Bali Yatra* signifies the culmination of historical trading practices that trace their roots back to the maritime trade in ancient Odisha. Earlier the traders used to embark on sea voyages to trade with the distant lands.

Over time this tradition has evolved into a cultural tradition where people make or buy small boats and set them afloat in the water bodies.

Both *Kartika Purnima* and *Bali Yatra* contribute significantly to ecological, economic and cultural sustainability. Ecologically, the usage of earthen lamps instead of artificial and electric lights reduces the carbon footprint and focuses more on the importance of sustainable practices. The miniature boats are made out of paper instead of materials such as plastic so as to reduce environmental degradation. Through the traditions, people offer their devotion towards the deities and also the water bodies on the occasion. During *Bali Yatra*, along with the shops and businesses, performances also take place that emphasize on spreading messages with social construct. The props that the performers use and the costumes that they use are put to use for as long as they are in good condition. At times the props used are derived from the ecosystem. Culturally, both *Kartika Purnima* and *Bali Yatra* serve the purpose of connecting the present generation to their roots, instilling a sense of pride in their rich cultural heritage. The tradition of *Kartika Purnima* encourages the preservation of traditional arts and crafts, ensuring that they continue for generations to come. Moreover, *Bali Yatra* and *Kartika Purnima* foster a sense of communion as people gather together on the riverbanks during the tradition. In *Bali Yatra* people gather together to entertain themselves, to engage in their businesses and to buy from the small scale shops set up in the fair. During *Kartika Purnima*, the local shop owners make use of their skills to make and sell the tiny boats along with the offerings to be made on the occasion. Economically, *Bali Yatra* is an abode for the local artisans and craftsmen to showcase and monetize their skills. *Bali Yatra* also attracts a lot of tourism which in turn creates more job opportunities and adds to the economic growth.

Bakula Amavasya is observed during the month of *Baishakh* or *Jyeshtha* (May - June) in Odisha. This is the time when the mango trees blossom all across the state. During this festival, the mango trees are worshipped, and people string garlands around the trees to symbolize their reverence for them. Sweet dishes made out of rice flour and jaggery called *Pithas* are offered to the trees as a form of thanksgiving. The festival is deemed important for the farmers and the mango cultivators who rely on the trees for their livelihood. The people who offer prayers to the trees at the time of the festival believe that performing these rituals will help keep them away from negative and diminishing energies and will further promote their well-being. According to the Hindu mythology, the *shani dosha* and the *pitra dosha* which are the negative karmic points affecting one's life will be warded off with this tradition.

Bada Osha is one of the many important traditions in Odisha. It is majorly an occasion of fasting where people worship Lord Shiva and seek his blessings. *Bada Osha* falls on the third day of *Panchuka* or the five days of sheer abstinence during the Odia month of *Kartika*. *Bada Osha* is very frequent in Odisha, especially at the *Dhambaleswara Pitha* on the Mahanadi river. During this time, both men and women according to their convenience keep a day long fast without even drinking a drop of water.

The speciality of the tradition is enhanced with the offerings of the renowned *Gaja Bhoga* which are flour fried sweets. *Gaja Bhoga* and *Tarana* are said to be Lord Shiva's favourite offerings. They are made of rice, flour, coconut, jaggery and cardamom. The devotees gladly wait till the deity is served and they break their fast with a bite of the offerings. According to the *Padma Puraana*, Lord Indra had offered prayers to Lord Dhableswara and had taken a holy dip in the Mahanadi river on the occasion of *Kartika Purnima* to retain himself from the curse of Lord Brahma. The devotees believe that if they follow the same path every year during *Panchuka*, they will be able to cure themselves of all their sins and live their lives peacefully.

This tradition holds a lot of significance culturally as it commemorates the divine intervention, and devotees fast and engage in the ritual as a form of penance and gratitude towards Lord Shiva. The festival serves as a platform for the preservation and restoration of cultural heritage, as families pass down rituals, stories, and recipes from one generation to the next. The act of fasting and engaging in the ritual becomes a shared cultural experience, creating a sense of community and solidarity among the people of Odisha. From an ecological perspective, *Bada Osha* promotes sustainable practices by encouraging the use of everything derived from plants and our surroundings in rituals and decorations. The devotees often make elaborate *rangolis* and decorations using traditional items such as rice paste, flowers, and leaves. This practice shows the reliance of the people on locally sourced and biodegradable materials. This further minimizes the harmful impact on the environment. Additionally, the offering of fruits, leaves, and natural substances during the tradition, reflects a deep-rooted connection between spirituality and nature. Economically, *Bada Osha* contributes to local businesses and artisans, particularly those involved in the production of traditional items and materials used during the festival. At this time there is an evident surge in tourism as people come from different places to offer prayers to Lord Shiva at Dhableswara. Adding to that, the local small shop owners make more money than usual, promoting the economic sustainability. This tradition promotes sustainable practices. The tradition of *Bakula Amavasya* believes in worshipping the trees which serve as the roof over the people's heads and also as their livelihood. Along the same lines, *Bakula Amavasya* also adds to the overall cultural sustainability. Through the ritual, many people remember their conventional cultural values and celebrating it every year becomes a reminiscence of their roots for the people in the society. In terms of economy, *Bakula Amavasya* is thriving as a tradition as the sellers make huge profits selling the mango harvest and sending them to other cities as well. The small scale shop owners make their share of profit from selling the offerings to be made on the occasion.

Gamha Purnima is celebrated in Odisha on the full moon day of the month of *Sraavana* or the month of July- August as the birthday of Lord Baladeva, the elder brother of Lord Shri Krishna. It is celebrated in some other states in India as *Rakhi Purnima*. In Odisha, specifically in Paralekh mundi it is celebrated with a popular game called the *Gamha-Diyan* or the *Gamha Jump*. According to the work by Dash and Mishra

(2016), before the auspicious occasion of *Gamha Purnima*, the *Gamha* or the platform is made of bricks, mud and grass. The mid portion of the platform is filled with stones to make it strong. It is built high and tall. Towards the lower end it is given the shape of a spur. Then there are two poles that are dug in opposite directions that are connected with a bamboo stick tied to the poles. With the help of the bamboo stick, several fruits like oranges, bananas, coconuts are tied. The people run from under the *Gamha* towards the top of the tower and try to catch the fruits. The person who touches the fruit is then awarded with a prize.

In terms of culture, there is a lot to learn from the tradition as we move ahead with time. The people celebrating understand the back story of the tradition which excites them to take part in the tradition every coming year. It definitely helps in promoting cultural sustainability, keeping intact the values and stories behind the tradition. Ecologically the celebration brings along a lot of value as all the requirements for it are mostly taken from the ecosystem and the surrounding environment. Most of the things required for the *Gamha Diyan* are easily available in their surroundings. This tradition, even though not as prominent as some others also contributes to the economic growth and sustainability as the sellers make money from selling fruits, bamboo sticks and the offerings. Since the tradition has an interesting background, people from all over Odisha and from other cities also visit at time of the *Gamha Purnima* to observe the tradition up close. This might not bring in a lot of tourism, but it does add to the overall economic sustainability.

Goal 11 aims at making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Since the Goal is primarily focused on sustainability, the age old narratives of the folklore of Odisha contributes a lot as it is embedded with wisdom about harmonious coexistence with nature, resilience and sustainable practices. With the help of their oral traditions, folk songs, performing arts, the folklore of the state imparts valuable information and cultural knowledge that promote all kinds of sustainability in many ways. The folk tales, folk songs often emphasize on the importance of preserving natural resources, respecting biodiversity and nurturing a deep connection with the ecosystem. Furthermore, folklore fosters a sense of community and educates people about their responsibility for the local environment. By preserving and restoring these old folk traditions, Odisha not only safeguards its cultural heritage but also contributes to achieving the SDG 11 by reinforcing sustainable values, encouraging responsible urbanization and providing a sense of stewardship towards the environment among its inhabitants. Goal 15 of the SDGs stands for protecting, restoring and promoting sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably managing forests, combating desertification, and halting and reversing land degradation and halting biodiversity loss. The folklore of Odisha also helps in attaining Goal 15 of the SDGs through its folk stories, songs, art forms that celebrate the rich biodiversity of the region, ranging from forests to coastal areas. During the well-known agricultural festivals of *Nuakhai* and *Akshay Tritiya* the cultural experiences imbibe a deep sense of respect for the flora and fauna,

this emphasizing the need for their preservation. These festivals indicate the commencement of the new harvest season. In the process of these festivals, the first seeds of harvest are offered to the deities of the land and the forest to ensure healthy and thriving harvest throughout the year. People are genuinely connected to their ecosystems due to which they believe that offering the first harvest and prayers to the ecosystem will satiate the Mother Earth.

8 Conclusion

Through our paper we have analysed some examples of prevalent rituals and traditions of Odisha such as *Chakuliya Panda*, *Pattachitra*, *Nuakhai*, *Akshaya Tritiya*, *Bali Yatra*, *Jhoti Chita*, *Manabasa Gurubaar*, *Prathamashami*, *Bada Osha* and have established their connection with the theme of sustainability and SDGs. It helps us realize how these elements of folklore majorly contribute to the multi dimensions of sustainability and how they work towards attaining SDG 1, SDG 11 and SDG 15 from the seventeen SDGs. By examining how folk performances, traditions, rituals and festivals reflect the theme of sustainability, this paper helps to create awareness and consciousness of the importance of sustainability among the people of Odisha. Thus, this paper contributes to the society and community of Odisha. This paper also contributes to the field of study of tradition in Odisha, sustainability and SDGs.

Considering the extensive collections of traditional cultural elements in Odisha, we have focused on a selection of types and examples. Future research can be pursued into the additional components and their interconnection with the theme of sustainability.

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