

Artistic Traditions, Memory and Cultural Identities in Majuli Island

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Abstract

Art has long served as a powerful medium through which societies remember, interpret and transmit their collective experiences. In culturally diverse regions artistic practices often function as repositories of memory, preserving narratives of faith, community and belonging across generations. Situated in the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam, Majuli presents a distinctive cultural landscape where art, performance and everyday traditions play a significant role in shaping cultural identity and historical consciousness. This paper examines the relationship between art, memory and identity in Majuli exploring how artistic and performative traditions contribute to the preservation and reconstruction of collective memory. Adopting a qualitative historical approach the study draws upon cultural narratives, community traditions and artistic practices associated with the island's socio-cultural life. These artistic practices function beyond their aesthetic and ritual dimensions as they serve as living sites of memory through which communities preserve religious narratives, historical experiences, social values and inherited knowledge systems. The paper talks about the island as a place where art operates as a medium of cultural remembrance and identity formation. By engaging with the intersections of Art History, Memory Studies and Identity Studies the research highlights how artistic traditions contribute to the continuity of cultural knowledge and community belonging in the face of environmental and social transformation. It also aligns with the sustainable development goals like Quality Education (SDG 4), Gender Equality (SDG 5), Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8), Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11) and Climate Action (SDG 13).

Keywords

Art, History, Cultural Identity, Majuli, Neo Vaishnavism.