

Unity in Diversity: The Uniqueness of Jagannath Culture of Odisha

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The fame and popularity of "the Lord of the Universe: Jagannath" is noticed both among the foreigners and the Hindu world. Despite many cultural invasions by outsiders and cross cultural barriers by few insiders, Odisha is still maintaining its 'unique culture' i.e. 'Jagannath culture' of "Unity in Diversity". Since time immemorial the very name "Cultural Unity" is maintained by its 'wide range of varieties'. Odisha's Jagannath culture maintains its unity through its Cultural

distinctiveness. Odisha is a beautiful land of many religions, many traditions, many castes and linguistic groups, so also multiplicity is found in Odia culture. Odisha's Jagannath Culture binds every devotee under "one platform", that is well known as "Jagannath Dhama" or it is also

known as "Jagannath Puri" which is very popular worldwide. Jagannath culture is so rich, pure and powerful that attracts many outsiders to visit Jagannath Puri time and again, especially during the world famous car festival. Sometimes, diversity may create threat in terms of cultural differentiation

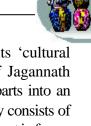
among different groups. But the fundamental principle of Jagannath Culture is based on "Unity in Diversity" to respect all human beings irrespective of their caste, colour, religion, ethnicity. This 'Cultural uniqueness' reduces fundamentalism, communalism and encourages all pilgrims to visit 'Jagannath Dham' and watch car festival again and again. 'Car Festival' of Jagannath Culture is a bright and beautiful example of cultural inclusion and reduction of exclusion. This article

tries to highlight the importance of Jagannath Culture through its uniqueness of "Unity in Diversity". It tries to encourage the true spirit of 'Cultural Uniqueness' through social inclusion of all devotees to visit 'Jagannath Dhama' or 'Srikshetra' — a pure and holy land of



Odisha region.

The human society in Odisha is based on some form of order of organization on the basis of Jagannath Culture. To recognize the 'Jagannath Culture' in true sense, one needs to understand



and identify the in-depthness of its 'cultural uniqueness'. The very essence of Jagannath culture implies on arrangement of parts into an integrated whole, unlike human body consists of different organs or parts, they are different in forms but integrated by a single soul, such a harmonious functioning of the unique culture is referred as Jagannath culture. Let us understand the different parts of Jagannath culture, then only, it will help us to understand the importance of integrated whole.

Odisha's traditional culture is a combination of varieties; so diversity is found in Jagannath culture. Diversity means difference. It means collective differences, such differences mark off one group of people from other. These differences may be biological, religious, linguistic etc. On the basis of religious differences we have religious diversity. Racial diversity is analysed on the basis of biological differences such as black and white, (Aryan and Dravidian). When a group of people share similar characteristics such as language, religion etc, more uniformity is found in such case, whereas, group of people who come from different races, religion and language etc, they represent diversity.

However, it is a fact that Odisha's Jagannath culture is based on its tradition, religion, language, folkways, etc. So diversification is observed in Jagannath culture. Jagannath culture starts from 'Jagannath Dham, Puri' (eastern Odisha) continues to West, North and Southern parts of Odisha like Aska and Gajapati. It spreads in diversified geographical areas of Odisha. Within the territory different castes, tribes, linguistic groups are residing together, so sometimes conflict may take place in the name of religion, castes, colours, which is a biggest challenge against cultural unity. There are several diversifying factors among which communality, casteism,

linguism and regionalism are notable. Communality in the society refers to feelings of rivalries based on religious differences. But 'Jagannath culture' stands much above all these narrowness. Though, in Hindu culture variety of sub-cultural and sub-linguistic groups are found but they all believe in one God, Lord Jagannath, one culture that is Jagannath culture which teaches us to love, care and respect all human beings.

The modern Odisha comprises the ancient States of Odra (part of Khurda district, Nayagarh, Dhenkanal, part of Angul), Utkal (present Balasore, part of Mayurbhanj, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Puri, part of Khurda and Nayagarh), Kalinga (present Ganjam, part of Boudh, part of Gajapati, part of Khurda), Kangoda (tracts in between Rusikulya and Mahanadi rivers and between Salima river (the modern day Salia river which flow in Banapur Tahasil area), Dakshina Kosala (comprising Sambalpur, Jharsuguda, Deogarh, part of Nuapada districts) and Trikalinga (comprising Kalahandi, part of Phulbani, part of Boudh, part of Nuapada, undivided Koraput and part of Ganjam). The modern day Odia script is an evolution of Odramagadhi which was prevalent in the above tracts of area more concentrated in Dakshina Kosala, Trikalinga, Odra and part of Utkal, Kalinga and Kangoda. Though there are varieties in terms of geographical boundaries within Odisha, but its evolution is associated with all these geographical territories. The Jagannath culture is a part and parcel of life of the people in these geographical boundaries. There are different Jagannath temples found in the said areas, different people performed their rites and rituals as per their local traditions. In this way geographical diversification is found in the Jagannath Culture. Unlike geographical diversification, cultural diversification is found in the Jagannath Culture. Shrikshetra of Puri



said to be a truthful replica of Indian culture. The impact of culture of Lord Jagannath in Odia literature has been such that it has moulded into a composite literature revolving round the culture of Lord Jagannath. The Odia script and Odia literature are nothing, but manifestation of various aspects of Lord Jagannath in the eyes of the poets and literary Pundits. To understand this culture, one has to have some idea of the history of this land, which again is different from that of other countries of the world. Starting from Lord Jagannath Himself, history has it that he was a tribal deity, adorned by the Sabar people, as a symbol of Narayan. Another legend claims him to be Nilamadhava, an image of Narayana made of blue stone and worshipped by the aboriginals. He was brought to Nilagiri (blue mountain) or Nilachala and installed there as Shri Jagannath in company with Balabhadra and Subhadra. The images made of wood are also claimed to have their distant linkage with the aboriginal system of worshipping wooden poles. To cap it all the Daitapatis, who have a fair share of responsibilities to perform rituals of the Temple, are claimed to be descendants of the aboriginals or hill tribes of Odisha. So we may safely claim that the beginning of the cultural history of 'Shrikshetra' is found in the fusion of Hindu and Tribal Cultures. So diversification is found in the origin of Jagannath culture.In this way caste, culture and traditional diversification are abserbed in the Jagannth Culture. This has been accepted as a facet of our proud heritage. The three deities came to be known as the symbols of Samyak Darshan, Samyak Jnana and Samyak Charita usually regarded as Triratha (of the Jain cult), an assimilation of which leads to Moksha (salvation) or the ultimate bliss.

Historical Diversity in Jagannath Culture: In the remote past, Odisha was inhabited by the

aboriginal tribes, who had a civilization and culture quite distinct from that of the Vedic Aryans. The Aryans migrated to Odisha at a later stage and the Vedic religion and culture along with the Upanisadic philosophy and Smarta rituals then began to spread in this country. Buddhism had better times during the rule of the Mauryan emperor Asoka, who conquered Kalinga (the coastal region of Odisha as known by that time) after a dreadful war in the third century B.C. It is said that after the conquest of Kalinga, Asoka abandoned violence, embraced Buddhism and left no stone unturned to propagate it throughout India including the newly conquered Kalinga. It continued to be popular in Odisha for several centuries before Sankaracharya visited Puri in the ninth century A.D. Jainism was perhaps at the height of its glory when Kharavela espoused its cause and took all steps to propagate it in the second century B.C. It is, therefore, historically reasonable to hold that the cult and culture of Jagannatha found its origin in the primitive system of worship of the non-Aryan tribals who had established a shrine for Jagannatha here, in this part of the country in a very ancient time, with all their religious fervour. Then the Aryans had taken it over to worship Jagannatha in Vedic rites and rituals with all religious practices connected with them. Buddhism and Jainism have penetrated in to the innermost apartments of the shrine of Jagannatha with all their religious and spiritual implications. There are different rites; rituals and the day-to-day service (Vidhis) of Lord Jagannatha which owe their origin either to Jainism or to Buddhism, or may be the combination of both, it is difficult to say that, but there are diversities found in those practices. As it is mentioned earlier that the Puranic texts corroborate that Jagannatha was originally a deity of the aboriginal tribes and was known as Nila Madhava, his image being made of some sort of



blue stone. Later, the god manifested himself in the form of four wooden images that we worship now and came to be known by the present-day names in an atmosphere of Vedic re-orientation. Thus, Jagannatha is equally claimed by the aboriginal tribes and the Vedic Hindus to be their original deity of worship. When we think of the Puri temple, we also think of the presiding deities therein as well as the pattern of cultural life that is in vogue around it, which inspire the pilgrims with the lofty ideal of emotional integration in the country. Hence the cult of Jagannatha as we call it now (by way of translating the words Jagannatha Dharma) has to be understood, interpreted and appreciated with all its social, cultural, religious and spiritual implications. Thus, the glory and greatness of Jagannathism may be brought out in the following manner. At a time when Jagannatha gained immense popularity, all important religious cults and creeds known to the people of India in' those days were assimilated into the texture of Jagannathism. Such a broad based system of religious life is not to be found anywhere in the world.'

Lord Jagannath is worshipped in different names by different devotees as Vishnu or Narayana or Krishna and Lord Balabhadra as Shesha. Simultaneously, the deities are regarded as the Bhairava (Shiva, the formidable) with Vimala (the Bhairavi or the consort of Shiva) installed in the campus of the temple. So ultimately we find a fusion of Saivism, Shaktism and Vaishnavism of the Hindu religion with Jainism and up to an extent Buddhism in the culture of Jagannath and the cultural tradition so reverently held together in Shrikshetra.

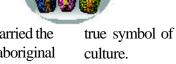
In Odisha different castes, tribes and religious groups are found, they worship their religious leaders/Gurus according to their own tradition. At the same time, different castes and

tribal groups of Odisha celebrate car festivals of Lord Jagannath as per their own regional customs.In this way Jagannath culture is maintained among diversified castes and tribes of Odisha. Odisha is muli-ethnic, multi-linguistic, multi-religious and multi-racial society. Different people worship differently. They have different faiths, different ideologies according to their own religion. In Odisha, the vast population is composed of people having different creeds, customs and colours. In this way Jagannath culture is determined in different shades. It does not fix up with only black or white paint, diversified colours of Jagannath culture make this culture so rich, more attractive and popular worldwide. In this way diversity is found in Jagannath culture.

Unity in Jagannath Culture: The very name "Jagannath" is not confined to a single heart, single mind, single person only, this name has a wider connotation, it is beyond our reach, it is popularly known as "Jagatara Natha" means 'leader of whole world', so it can not be confined to one soul. Despite different diversification of Jagannath culture in terms of caste, colour, religion, ethnicity, Odisha's Jagannath culture is world famous because of its unique culture of 'Unity in Diversity'.

Unity means integration where in hitherto diverse people and culture are synthesised into a united whole. Jagannath culture connotes a sense of oneness. It stands for the bond which holds the members of the society together. There is a difference between unity and uniformity, uniformity presupposes similarity, unity does not. Unity in Jagannath culture is born out of uniformity or similarity. It implies a sense of togetherness, encourage wefeeling, it stands for the tie that binds the diverse groups with one another.

As stated earlier, Vidyapati, who is credited with the discovery of Nila Madhava (the



original form or image of Jagannatha) married the daughter of Viswavasu, the chief of the aboriginal tribes. Later on, he was blessed with children through this lady. It is really interesting to note that even to this day, the descendants 'of both Viswavasu and Vidyapati discharge the most important rituals of the temple. They are known as Daita-Pati i.e. descendants of Viswavasu and Vidyapati. Most likely the word Daita is from Daitya or a person of non-Aryan society and Pati is from Vidyapati and they have been combined to connote that, they divided into two sections, are the descendants of both the aboriginal chief and the Brahmin priest. In a society torn under caste discriminations, the so-called high-caste Brahmins do not partake food if touched by the so-called low caste people. But the food offering of the Jagannatha temple which is called Mahaprasada (literally the great grace) is a wonder of the Hindu world. It is the established practice that the moment this Mahaprasada is served, no Hindu of the so called high castes objects to partake it even from the same plate with any person of the so-called low castes. Usually persons of all castes are seen enjoying Mahaprasada sitting in a row.

Though, geographically, Jagannath culture is spreading from one location to another, but starting from East to West, North to South, people of Odisha believe in 'one God', 'Lord Jagannath', who is the supreme of all powers and caretaker of everyone. Be it his food Mahaprashad or be it his place Srikshetra is so pure, holy and spiritual, which binds every devotee under one roof. This sense of 'uniqueness', 'belongingness' binds every heart and soul in one culture which exists beyond boundary. This is more prominent during car festival, people from different corners of the world is gathered in one geographical area of Puri Badadanda or Srikshetra to celebrate the world famous car festival of Lord Jagannath. This is the

true symbol of "unity in diversity" of Jagannath culture.

The Car Festival held in June-July every year is symbolic of many lofty ideals of a highly developed society where equality in treatment and of opportunities are considered to be the fundamental right of every individual. When theosophy and religion are viewed from this point, it becomes imperative that everybody should be treated as equal in the eyes of God. The Car Festival, participated by lakhs of pilgrims from the whole of India and abroad, has a number of vidhis or practices in connection with the pulling of the chariots and the journey of Jagannatha to the garden house. One of the vidhis is called Chherapahanra. This literally means the sweeping of the floor. On this occasion, when the deities are brought from the main temple and placed on the special seats designed for them on the chariots, the Raja of Puri who is recognized as the scion of the earlier sovereign emperors of Odisha and presently holds the most important office of Chairman in the management of the temple, is required to sweep the floor of the chariots in front of the deities with a golden broom-slick. Thousands of eyes watch the performance with rapt attention. Amidst uproarious clapping, the mammoth gathering offers its felicitations to the traditional head of the State as he performs the duties of a sweeper. This vidhi bring home the idea to everybody that the highest political head of the State is not superior to a sweeper in the eyes of God, who is the supreme object of, worship by everybody equally on the earth. Needless to say, this vidhi or practice is symbolic of the highest form of social justice, equality and unity that has remained an objective to be realized by humanity in all walks of life. It is, no doubt maintains unique culture of unity in diversity through rendering services to Lord Jagannath.



Though, the people of Odisha is different from each other on the basis of their caste, colour, religion and linguistic groups but everyone believes on one religious leader who is none other than Lord Jagannath, who protects everyone from all distress. However, each religious book teaches us the same humanity to help poor and needy, to protect the women's dignity, to respect elderly person, above all maintain unity in diversity.

The sacred place of Puri or Purusottam in the East assumed increasing prominence through ages as one of the four famous Dhams, others being Badrinath in the North, Dwaraka in the West and Rameswaram in the South. It was recognized by Adi Shankaracharya as one of the eminent places of pilgrimage in the eighth century A.D. Puri assumed more and more importance as great Vaishnava Acharyas like Sri Ramanuja, Sri Vishnuswami, Sri Nimbark and Sri Madhavacharya visited this place. Subsequently, it was visited by great saints of various religious communities namely Nanak, Kabir, Sri Chaitanya and so on. It was compared with Kashi, Mathura, Vrindavan, Ujjain, Prayag, Gaya, Ayodhya and other sites of pilgrimage. Lord Jagannath is the presiding deity of Puri and a prominent symbol of Hindu Kingdom. The Gajapati King of Puri was recognized as the supreme royal authority, for safeguarding the hoary traditions and long-ranging rituals, year-round festivals with all Pujas, Veshas, Prasads and Mahaprasads. But the king did not claim any supremacy rather he was humble, loyal, devoted and committed to the famous traditions and heritage honoured by all sections of Hindu community. The king however, felt himself as the first servant of Lord Jagannath although he is ever regarded as the moving god (Chalanti Vishnu), the temporal incarnation of god. The glory of Lord Jagannath and supremacy of the king are acknowledged by all because of this uniqueness of Jagannath culture. Lord Jagannath is

symbolizing some aspect of human aspiration, he is also known as Lord Vishnu: The cosmic sustainer of the phenomenal universe and bestower of salvation or moksha. He is the supreme god of all sects. Though, Vaisnava saints advocated for worship of different forms of Vishnu Avatars or incarnations like Nrusimha, Krisna, Rama, Narayana, Gopinatha, Madhava, Ananta Sayana and Vasudeva. While those of Ramananda looked upon him as Ramachandra. Other Vaisnavite sects treat Jagannatha as Krishna. Odishan Vaisnavas consider Jagannatha as the combined body of Radha and Krishna. This would explain that Jagannatha represents an assimilation of all religious cults, creeds and sectarian philosophies that come under the purview of Hinduism in the broadest sense of the term. With such a cultural background of Indian social life, one may like to know, if the world famous temple of Jagannatha has got any message to deliver. There is a saying in Odisha that 'In Puri, there is no caste system. In other temples of India, people of some castes such as the sweepers, the washer men etc. are not allowed into the inner apartments, but in the Puri temple, they are not only allowed to entry, but people of these castes discharge certain specific duties and services for the performance of some traditional rites for Jagannatha. Here unity is maintained through duties in Jagannath culture. It is believed that all these Avatars will be worshipped in one God as "Lord Jagannath", he is unity of 33 crores of Gods and Goddesses, and by worshipping Lord Jagannath one can worship all these Gods and Goddesses at the same time. Here unity in diversity is maintained through traditional beliefs.

Thousands of people, artists, artisans, producers and priests are employed through generations. Specific potteries and paintings are required at a large scale. Pandas and Purohits, Pandits, dancers and musicians are engaged in

various rituals and festivities. Various specific services are rendered by people through hereditary arrangements. Previously hundred of acres were given to these people through endowments. The systems of Pattachitra paintings, the Chamar Seva and of the Devadasis are very specific to the Puri temple. The Chamar Seva is a special service rendered to gods and it is a right enjoyed by some people. Similarly Chitrakaras are required for preparing Pattachitra and painting the idols of gods etc in the temple and cars during festivals. These people mostly live in some lanes in and around the Puri town and the village like Raghurajpur. Similarly various kinds of potteries are prepared by some people who enjoy this right through endowments of land from ancient times. Devadasi system was prevalent for entertaining the Gods. The Odishan art, literature and music are influenced immensely by Sri Jagannath Culture. The traditional Mahari dance Odishi dance, classical songs, are mostly developed under the influence of Lord Jagannath and His favourite lyrics of Geeta Govinda was composed by the immortal poet Jayadev. Many poems and fictions are also written under the influence of Sri Jagannath culture. A lot of folk tales, folk songs, proverbs Chautisas etc. are also influenced by Sri Jagannath culture. Mahaprasad has acquired a special and significant position in the life and religion of Odisha. The cookery of Srimandir is known as the largest cooking system. The sanctity of this holy food is boundless and it is known as a sacred bond between gods and men and among the people. It is interesting to note that Mahaprasad is not only delicious, but also enjoyed by all irrespective of caste, creed and religion. This is also given priority before serving any other food in a feast. It strengthens the bondage between castes and relations. Especially newly formed bondages of marriage are

solemnized by Mahaprasad. The Mahaprasad is

prepared daily many times inside the temple very scientifically. Even during the Car Festival, Mahaprasad is cooked in Gundicha Mandir and taken by thousands of people. It is thus found that Sri Jagannath Culture with its uniqueness of 'unity in diversity' has a great impact on the sociocultural and religious life of Odia people in particular and Hindu community in general. A deep sanctity and significance is attached to the culture of Lord Jagannath not only by Hindus, but also by many people belonging to other religions. Particularly, Srimandir, Sri Jagannath and His allied objects are given great honour and reverence by the people of Odisha. Lord Jagannath is not only the presiding deity, but also His temple is regarded as the nerve centre controlling all aspects and spheres of Odia people. It is a fact that non-Hindus are not admitted into the Puri temple, but the Hindus of all castes including the aboriginal tribes, the Jains, the Sikhs and the Buddhists are all allowed into it. That is the reason why the temple of Jagannatha is so popular worldwide.

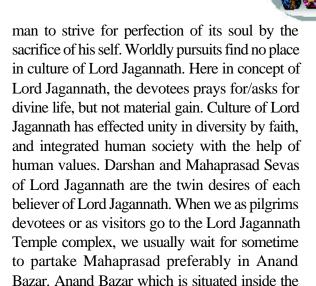
The land of Odisha is very peculiar for the simple reason that eventhough many tribal communities form the major part of the population, but they almost have a common spiritual belief as a result of which the worships of Lord Jagannath as we all know now has been a evolving synthesis of many people, but with a common stream of thought flowing from pre-Vedic period as is evident from many Purans and comparative study of old civilization as well as archaeological excavation. The worship of Lord Jagannath in Odisha, as is described in the preceding paragraph, has led to evolution of distinct culture which is usually described as Jagannath culture. Jagannath culture believes in universality but not in sectarianism. Lord Jagannath as we know now is the God of masses, but not of individuals with individual choice and thus naturally Jagannath



culture has been observed as a mass culture. People of diverse faiths with their distinct social backgrounds have worshipped Lord Jagannath as their own. From the footprints of the ageless cultural heritage in India and abroad, we find that tribal (original inhabitant of Odisha), Dravidians, Aryans, orthodox Hindus, Jains, Buddhists, Sikhs. sects of Hinduism i.e. Vaishnavites, Saivites, Ganapatyas, Saurays, Shaktas have reposed their implicit faith in Lord Jagannath according to their beliefs. Culture of Lord Jagannath has been an elastic culture. Apart from influencing other culture it has, in course of time and passage of ups and downs, social, political, financial status of the common people which comprise the modern day Odisha, has incorporated in its fold, the various cultures and their salient aspects of various faiths. Jagannath Mahaprabhu is wooden deity (Saura) without any sense organ. At the same time, he is Dravidian deity with sense organ. He is the Purusottam of the Veda and Darubrahmas of Brahmins. He is the Dakhinkali for the Saktas and Vairaba for the Saivites. He is Mahaganapati for the Ganapatyas and at the same time he is the Suryanarayan for the Sauryas. His festivals are of Puranic origin and rituals are admixture of tribal rituals as well as Sakta's Nyasa and Mudrus and many more. His majority of rituals are based on Uddiyan Tantras which are the refined versions of Mahayan Tantras as well as Shabari Tantras which are evolved from Tantrik Buddhism and tribal belief respectively. Of his Mantras incantation Oum is Vedic and Hlim, Slim, Klim are Tantrik. His Kaibalya (dried Mahaprasad of rice) is of Jaina origin and Nirmalya of Saivite origin. His worship, attire, foods rites and rituals are nothing, but a synthesis of various cultures and beliefs. But, at the same time it is free from all types of regional separatism, scriptural exclusiveness and regional narrowness. By its wonderful power of assimilation it has effected

the synthesis of all cultural communities, States and universe. One of the major salient features of culture of Lord Jagannath is tolerance which is an outstanding human value propagated by culture of Lord Jagannath which postulates with every way of life as its contribution in its specific way to the human welfare. The culture of Lord Jagannath stands for religious tolerance, co-existence of all religions, communal harmony and international integration. This has led to the present day situation in which we see that Lord Jagannath is worshipped by all irrespective of castes, creed, colour and community. As a result, the entire universe and inhabitants of universe are part and parcel of the concept of culture of Lord Jagannath. To understand the influence of culture of Lord Jagannath on people of Odisha, it is necessary to analyze the various aspects of culture of Lord Jagannath which are the seeds for germination in respect of Odia people. The gap between men and divine has been bridged in Jagannath culture because Jagannath is a highly humanized Deity. He brushes his teeth, takes bath, changes his cloth, wears out robes and gold ornaments, studded with diamond, enjoys 56 varieties of food (Mahaprasad) and 36 categories of servitors pay their "Seva Khatani" according to their "Khatani routine", for the daily duties relating to worship of Lord Jagannath.

Jagannath culture does not admit any distinction among the castes and communities. Jagannath culture aims at liberating poor and down-trodden for better life for which He is called Patitapaban and for which he observes Ratha Yatra. Humbleness is a cardinal human value which is amply prevalent in culture of Lord Jagannath. Culture of Lord Jagannath always takes a positive view of the life away from the pessimistic thought of grief, suffering and death. It recommends strong faith in Divine. It teaches



premises of Lord Jagannath Temple, Puri is a

place where Mahaprasad is served in shape

cooked rice, dals, curry, sweets and Sukhila Bhog

etc. Mahaprasad reduces untouchability, casteism,

regionalism, superiority and inferiority complex

between individuals; all are treated equally in the

eyes of Lord Jagannath.

Conclusion: The Jagannath culture is a fusion of Unity and Diversity, in one hand diversity creates differentiation in terms of opinions among masses, whereas Unity provides strength to this unique culture and its tradition. They are the two sides of the same coin; two sides are interdependent with each other in the following ground.

From very early time, Jagannath culture is visualized as one culture of Jagannath Dhama, the whole landmass from Puri to Sambalpur in one region. In this way geographical unity is maintained by Jagannath culture. Although, Jagannth Dhama is a land of many religions, the concept of Jagannath culture is essentially a religious one. Hinduism, being the religion of the majority of the people of Odisha provides a basis for unity. It is a fact that Hinduism in Jagannath culture is not a monolithic religion. There are

number of sects in Hinduism. But they have some common faith with slight variation. The same myth, legends and deities are shared by all the Hindus in spite of their scriptures like the Vedas, Upanishads and the Gitas, epics like the Mahabharat, the Ramayan and the Bhagabat read by every Hindu give rise to the feeling of unity. Jagannath temple exists in four parts of Odisha viz. East, West, North and South. Car festival is also celebrated in all parts of Odisha, this shows the religious unity of Jagannath culture. Jagannath culture is based on cultural integrity. The fundamental approaches to art, philosophy, literature are typically based on Jagannath tradition. These common social functions and cultural traditions foster cultural unity. Last but not least, there is an emotional bond that binds all inhabitants of very beautiful land of Jagannath Puri. The very name "Jagannath Dhama" emotionally brings all devotees under one roof (Jagannath Kshetra). Jagannath culture has had a remarkable tradition of interdependence which has held us together within the same culture. One manifestation of it is found in the form of Jajmani system. It is a system of interdependence of castes. In Jagannath culture people may find some diversification which is determined on the basis of rich traditions, varieties of languages, traditional caste/religious groups, geographical boundaries. While its democratic structure protects its political unity, its 'cutural unity form' guarantees the harmonious co-existence of socio-cultural diversities. The world is seldom known a rich traditional culture like Jagannath culture of Odisha with an age old socio-cultural diversity which gives a unique impression of pluralism. Name of the federal concept, old or new, bourgeoisie or socalist are known to encompass such a wide range of distinction within a particular territory. Viewing the unity and its rich cultural heritage intellectuals say that Jagannath culture presents



'diversity in unity'while other says Jagannath culture holds 'unity in diversity'. However, a true devotee always feels proud for this 'uniqueness' of Jagannath culture which binds diversified people in a strong cultural unity. So that, we can proudly say 'Jai Jagannath' and Odisha's great Jagannath Culture "

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