

## Leisure Pattern among Males of a Nomadic Tribe :Raika

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### Abstract

Raikas are the largest group of nomadic pastoralists of India. Each year after the rains, hundreds and thousands of shepherds embark in collective camps on migratory journeys that can span distance of up to 1200 kms and last up to nine months. The present paper is an attempt to study the leisure pattern among males of Raika. Fieldwork has been done in two villages predominantly inhabited by Raikas, Raika Ki Dhani and ManpurBakdi in Pali Sirohi Belt.

**Keywords:** Rebari,Leisure,Migration.

### Profile :

For studying the leisure pattern among males of Raikas during their sedentary as well as migratory part of life, ten migratory flocks and 45 sedentary families were studied through ethnographic research approach. The major issues discussed in the following paragraphs reflect the ingredients of leisure pattern among males of a nomadic community, Raikas of Rajasthan. As a wandering tribe, the Raikas lead a life full of hardships and worries, their first and foremost concern is that of earning their livelihood. Raikas represent the predominant pastoral nomadic group of western Rajasthan who earn their living by rearing sheep, goat and camel. Though they are also called Rebari( in Gujarat) or Dewasi, but 'Raika' seems to be the most frequently used terms for the tribe in Rajasthan. The Rebari does not necessarily refer to caste membership. It was used in northern India for cattlemen or for people knowledgeable about cattle. The term *rewar* in colloquial language in the region is used for a herd of cattle. The term Dewasi derives from the fact that Raika society is governed by ten (*das*) rules.

In Rajasthan, the mean annual rainfall varies from 100 mm on the Indo-Pakistan border and 210 mm at Jaisalmer to about 350 mm to 400 mm in parts situated more towards the eastern region but the thorny vegetation of the entire area has supported a significant population of both sheep and camel. In Pali, camel herds are smaller but sheep are reared in large number. In Marwar, although the herds do have a couple of camels, which are the beasts of burden, the Raika mainly specialize in sheep breeding and tending. The Raikas of Jalore and Sirohi are predominantly sheep breeding communities. As an exception certain Raika hamlets like Jojawar in Pali and Ghum-ki-dhani in Kota are famous for owning large camel herds numbering 2 to 3 thousand animals. Although a few Raikas are specialized camel herders, the community as a whole identifies itself closely with camel.

The origin of Raikas is believed to come into existence when Lord Shiva or Mahadev (the great god) was created for the specific purpose of looking after the first camel that Parvati, the *ardhangini* (wife) of Lord Shiva, created from clay. The Raikas are divided into two large endogamous groups, the Maru Raika and GodwarRaika. Of course, which group occupies a high ritual status is a matter of controversy. Traditionally, the Godwars are reputed to have breed only camels, whereas Maru group breeds sheep. At present, however, both groups keep sheep as well as camel, and less frequently other cattle. Marus inhabit Bikaner, Jaisalmer and Marwar regions. Godwars are, mainly concentrated in Godwar, through their hamlets are also found in Marwar. There is another group of Raikas called Kutchi. They inhabit region of Kutch, and are distinct from others in their dress and hairstyle. This group, too, is thought to have migrated from western Rajasthan. Broadly, the Raikas are found distributed in the districts of Nagaur, Jodhpur, Barmar, Pali, Sirohi and Jalore in Rajasthan. Raikas in Rajasthan invariably live outside the main village in their own hamlet locally known as *dhani*.

#### **Concept of Work and leisure:**

Work and leisure form an essential part of life of a community. Whereas, 'work' signifies the activities conducted for subsistence, 'leisure' denotes the means by which a working community revives its energy. The essential difference between work & leisure lies in the result, which these two activities generate. While 'work' is a compulsory activity for bread earning, leisure is an optional and recreational activity to generate happiness and energy.

Quoting the report Transactions (2006) "Profound transformations are occurring in the nature and organization of work with potentially far-reaching social and economic consequences. In many countries there is an intensification of workloads and increasing job insecurity". Lewin (2003) as added to the context - "In some organizations flexibility of working practices is being coupled with policies purporting to support the integration of work and non-work life, sometimes in response to new attitudes, values and aspirations of key workers; but also to enhance creativity, improve company loyalty, and reduce absenteeism and turnover." Yet many employees are experiencing long working hours, intensified workloads, constantly changing work practices, and job insecurity" (Burchall et al. 1999; Transitions 2006)<sup>3</sup>. Stress at work and home is viewed as a major problem" (Worrall and Cooper 2001; Schneider et al. 2004).<sup>4</sup>

#### **Universe and Methodology**

Raikas, subject of this study, are scattered over a large part of south-western Rajasthan. Raikas mainly inhabit the districts of Pali, Sirohi, Jalore, Barmer, Jaisalmer, Nagaur and Jodhpur in Rajasthan. However, a unique feature of Raikas is their settlement pattern. They lead both a sedentary and a migratory life. They are basically a migratory folk, although they spend quite a significant part of their life as sedentary people. As such it is imperative that they be studied in both the situations. In order to do that, it was in the fitness of things that the

villages included in the sample belong to the region inhabited by Raikas. As such two villages of the Pali district having not only a reasonable number of Raika households but also with a multicasite character were chosen to constitute the sub-universe of the study keeping in view the fact that the various above mentioned districts of the south-western region of Rajasthan inhabited by Raikas is infact the universe of the study. Not that there are no villages of exclusive Raika households but in order to have an opportunity to study the interaction pattern of Raikas with other communities during their sedentary period it was thought proper that multicasite villages having good number of Raika families be included in the sample. These chosen villages, as most other Raika inhabited villages, are on a prominent migratory path. The villages chosen for the study are, Manpur and Raika-ki-dhani.

Manpur is a small multicasite village situated at a distance of 10 Km on north-eastern side of Pali city. In this village 75 families belong to other castes, namely Baniya, Brahmin, Rajput, Lohar, Kumawat and Meghwal. 30 families belong to Raikas. Of the Raika families only four are of Godwar sub-caste and the rest are of Maru sub-caste. Raikas live at the periphery of the village and their houses are quite close to each other. All other castes live inside the village. Houses of villagers of one community are close to each other, but are apart from houses of other communities. Houses of Raikas are generally *kaccha*; only two houses were observed to be *pucca*. Some houses also had a small temple like structure at their courtyard, in which a small idol of an ancestor is seated. In their local dialect they call it Bomyaji and they worship it in their own ritualistic fashion.

The other village chosen for study is Raika-ki-dhani. It is a small village situated at the periphery of Pali city. Total number of families living in the village are 50 and of them 15 are Raika households. It is approximately 5 km. from Manpur. Among Raika household five families belong to Godwar sub-caste and the rest are Maru. This also is a multicasite village and other castes that occupy the village are Baniya, Kumawat, Soni and Meghwal. Like in other Raika hamlets, here also Raikas reside at the periphery of the village and lead their lives away from villagers of other castes. Earlier, only Raikas used to reside in Raika-ki-dhani but for the past some years this trend has changed, and people of other castes have also started living there. Houses of the families of other castes, especially Baniyas, are quite good, but those of Raikas are *kaccha*. Bhomyaji is installed and worshipped in almost each household belonging to Raikas.

Thus in the two villages chosen for study the total number of Raika households is 45 and all have been taken up in the sample. Total number of Raikas in these 45 households is 405.

Several tools have been used for the purpose of this study. While a schedule has been used as a basic tool, help of interview guides, interview with key informants and observation have been taken for studying the sedentary life and general life pattern of the community. This basic tool i.e. schedule has been further substantiated both by quasi-participant observation as well as interviews for studying the migratory pattern of their life. Group interactions and focused group interviews have also been used to some extent. One group of migrant

Raikas i.e. one migratory group has been studied in depth through quasi-participant observation. However, on the whole a leisuological approach was used for deeper probing and understanding of the various facets of their life. Every possible effort was made to share the leisure and free time of the respondents to draw the truth of their lives so that the closest reconstruction of reality of the Raika community could be accomplished. Inclusive sampling was done and all 45 Raika families were taken as a sample.

Questions relating to leisure and culture were asked from 120 males and 55 boys who were randomly selected from the members of 45 Raika families that constituted the sample of the study.

A study of nomadic community like Raikas would be incomplete if for a spot study, one does not accompany a group of them on their migratory journey. Therefore, we decided to contact one group belonging to Manpur at the periphery of Pali city. It was necessary to convince the leaders of the group about our purpose. Having done so, our association with the group became easy and educative. We had selected the route beginning from the suburb of Pali leading to Gujrat through Barmer and again returning back to Manpur. Since the entire route takes about 9 months to cover the on and return journey, we chose to accompany the group from Pali to Sadri, which took nine days. This provided sufficient insights with regard to the leisure pattern of Raikas on migration.

The following patterns were observed during the field work:

- **Leisure Pattern of Raika Males:** As discussed earlier, Raikas are semi-nomads thus their leisure time activities are vast and varied. A systematic study of these activities, therefore, required some broad classification in order to avoid confusion and overlapping. It was both convenient and congenial to bank upon the pattern of classification provided by Ishwar Modi(1985)in his book, *Leisure, Mass Media and Social Structure*. This book contains almost all the leisure time activities of social groups in both urban and rural setting, and includes the leisure time activities that also engage pastoral nomads. Thus, the classification given by Ishwar Modi applied aptly to the leisure time activities of Raikas.
- **Leisure Hours Available to Boys:** For the sake of classification and convenience boys below twenty years of age were included in this category. 55 boys were interviewed for fulfilling the aim of study. Leisure hours of boys varied from 1 hour to 7 hour per day. It was observed that almost half of the boys who studied, had more than 3 hours of leisure time each day. The boys getting less than two hours of leisure were school going children and their age group was between 7-14 years. The daily routine of these children, after returning from school, included looking after their cattle, taking them to graze or for drinking water, helping in cleaning *bada*, milk the cows or do such other sundry jobs.
- **Priority of Leisure and Recreational Activities among Raika Boys:** The responses of 55 subjects with regard to the means of recreation which they most enjoy and prefer to indulge in during their leisure time showed that

their first interest is games and sports (34.65%), second is hobby oriented activities (21.82%), and the third is quietist activities (18.28%). It was also noted that games and sports vary according to age. Small children amuse themselves by rolling wheeled sticks and toy carts or move the seesaw up and down. Sometimes they loop a string over their fingers and then transfer to the fingers of their friends so as to form a variety of patterns.

Grown up boys were sometimes seen playing a game which can be described as an intriguingly checkered pattern engraved on a stone slab. In their local dialect, this game is called as *sola-saar*. Each of the two players uses sixteen counters, one set of red brick pieces and the other of grey or white pebbles. The game starts by arranging the counters on either side by the respective players. Then a player moves one of his counters in a front row a step forward along the line. The rules of game allow the counters to be moved from some places even diagonally from where they can have three or even more options for movement. Each player has his objective of capturing the opponent's field, with as many of his counters as possible for its occupation. Step by step, the players keep their onward march, killing the counter of the opponent by jumping over it whenever there is a vacant place available beyond. Thus, the game continues and whosoever manages to put a larger number of counters in the opponent's camp wins the game.

Other interesting games in which Raika youngsters have been noticed to be engaged are:

**Hide and seek:** In their local dialect this game is known as '*ise-pice*'. Two parties play the game in which captains of both the parties make a toss. The one who wins hides and other party, who loses, search the hiding members of the first party.

A broken blade of shovel is tied to a rope; one child sits on it while two children hold the rope and pull it to give the child a joy ride turn by turn.

Young boys often indulge in *kushti* (wrestling) in an enthusiastic manner.

They also play *gullidanda*. With a wooden rod a small wooden piece is hit and the distance at which the wooden piece falls is measured with the rod. The larger the distance the better the performance.

They also play an interesting game with metal lids of bottle. Children generally roam about the shops of cold drinks with the intention of collecting the thrown away bottle-lids. They play the game of *chit pat* (head and tail) with them. Each contributes one bottle lid from his side. The lids so collected are put by a boy in his fist, and then they are thrown on the ground. The lids falling on their heads are lost, whereas those falling in reverse orders are won. Each child repeats this sort of chance activity in turn. The winners become the owners of the lids collected for the game.

They play chess like game which, in their local dialect, is called as *nakh chowk*. A rectangular design is made on the floor by scratching with a piece of stone or wood. Small pebbles of dice are thrown over this design and then they are counted in each square.

They generally engage themselves in the game of *kabaddi*. They form two groups of 5 to 7 boys each. A quadrangle is divided into two parts by drawing a straight line in the middle. Each group occupies a division of the quadrangle. Turn by turn a member of one group sweeps the territory of the other uttering some words in one unbroken breath. The members of invaded territory try to hold this invador within their territory to break the breath. If he can reach his own territory without breaking to breath; he wins and his party gets a point, otherwise the invaded party gets a point. A party with more points wins at last.

Sometimes boys are observed playing hockey, which in their local dialect they call *dadiramta*. The ball is generally made of cloth and rope while the stick is a branch of a tree slightly turned at one end.

Other leisure time activities of grown up children are games like *ghotadadi*(ball), *khambakho*.

Some of them are interested in singing songs, some even compose them and these in their local dialect are called *raginis*.

Second priority is given to hobby-oriented activities of which the most favourite is to roam about in village, or *dhani* or any city (if they are on migration and if they happen to pass through it), or to run after the animals observing nature.

Third priority is given to quietist activities, which include day sleeping, sitting idle at home, relaxing and walking. Other activity, which accounts for the participation of a small number of the respondents, were artistic and cultural in nature. These include wide range of activities such as visiting *melas* (fairs), merry making and doing fun, and playing on musical instruments (particularly fluet) while grazing animals. Sometimes they were also observed playing on empty tins as *dholak* or *tabla*, singing Rajasthani folk songs, telling *kahaniya* (stories) and asking *aadis* (puzzles) to each other, or attending any drama or *nautanki* whenever such troops happens to come for their village or when they happen to pass through any village, where drama or *nautanki* is going on. At the time of Dushera, they also participate in Ramlila as well as visiting Ramlilaorganized in or near the villagewith their friends and relatives. Cinema accounts for 5.5% respondents as a most common means of recreation and leisure. Since their village has no cinema hall, therefore, for seeing movies, they would have to travel to Pali, which is a strain on their monetary funds. Thus, they go out for cinema very rarely. They generally see movies at *mela* or in any nearby village when some mobile van screens it, or during migration, if they happen to visit a town or city having cinema hall.

Group-oriented and family oriented activities are most common leisure time activities for the responding boys. Group oriented activities are gossiping with friends or relatives, meeting people, meeting friends, moving with friends, visit to friends, visit to neighbor, social gatherings such as during festivals and feasts and receiving visitors. Family oriented activities includes, talking and gossiping with the members of family or with children, taking care of old and playing with kids. T.V. is a leisure time activity of only about 1.8% of respondents. Today in the changing times, when T.V. is becoming a popular recreational

activity, the reason for the low percentage of respondents to prefer viewing T.V. is that in the whole *dhani*, there are only two T.V. sets, so only occasionally they seek permission to see T.V. Moreover, after having attained the age of 15 years, Raika boys regularly go on migration with adults, which also discourage them to view T.V. A small percentage (1.8%) may be said to be indulging in deviant activity during leisure time. During the field visit, only one young boy was identified who smoked *bidi* whenever he is free.

### Patterns of Leisure among Men

Raikas being a semi-nomadic tribe, are on migration for about 6 to 9 month in a year, along with their herds in search of pastures and water. Normally women, aged males and small children do not go on migration and stay back at home in the *dhani* waiting for their loved ones to come back. Thus, the number of leisure hours, they get during migratory and sedentary part of year are different. Their priorities of recreational activities are also different and thus the pattern of leisure of men, for the convenience of study is divided into two parts:

- a) Pattern of leisure during migration.
- b) Pattern of leisure during sedentary period.

During migration, schedule of Raika men remains quite hectic and they get very little time for leisure. Raika herdsmen are convinced that they have no leisure time; a term, which in their local dialect they call *khalisamayor thaloor fursat*. In fact during field work of this study, when some of them were asked about their leisure time activities they got irritated and retorted that their daily job is a 24-hour engagement and the question of *thalo* or *fursat* does not arise. Most of them remarked '*mharochobisghanterodhandhochhai*', meaning thereby that they are engaged in their work all the 24 hours.

Herding the cattle during the day and taking care of them and their families in deserted places during night leaves no leisure time for them. Keeping an eye on herds and constant vigilance against theft or calamity are tasks that allow no *fursat*. For the sake of this study the daytime schedule of Raika men was filled in formats and the hours they could get for leisure were estimated.

Among adult Raikas a majority of men, get less than two hours of leisure per day. About 40% of them get between 2 to 3 hours of leisure while only a small number get an opportunity to spend more than 3 hours of leisure per day. The elderly males who are above 50 years of age get more leisure per day.

Adult men among Raikas prefer to indulge in group-oriented activities during their leisure hours. These activities include meeting people, gossiping with other Raikas (and also sometimes with non-Raikas if they get an opportunity for this), sharing *hukka/chilam*, taking opium and chewing betel leaves. Second priority is given to quietist activities, of which their favourite is just to take rest for a while which in their local terminology, they call *sustavno*. If an elevated platform or *chabutra* is not available a herdsman stands over a raised place, bending his right or left-leg on the other holding the *dando*. This is also a method of *sustavno*. Their other leisure time activities which can be included in this category are to

think about the *ewar* (herd), finding solution to problems faced by them with the disappearance of grazing grounds, thinking about any feasts to be given, experimenting with new vegetation (which they had not seen earlier) by tasting it or rubbing it on the skin, observing of rain or guessing in which direction abundant vegetation and water can be found.

The third most popular leisure and recreational activity was playing cards. Other games include playing *chaupar*, after returning from grazing grounds. A cloth on which this game is played is spread on the ground. It has four projections in four directions emerging from a large square in the middle. Each of the four players use four wooden counters of the same shape, but of different colours. The run of these wooden counters is determined by the throw of dice or shells.

Another substantial category of leisure and recreational activity which accounted for the participation of as many as 10% of respondents is artistic and cultural. It included, wide range of activities such as visiting and participating in *melas*, merrymaking, where they engage in enjoying all sorts of fun, eating delicious foods and beholding entertaining items. They are also fond of seeing circus, if they happen to pass through any city or village or town where circus is going on. Quite often, when they get together, they start singing their folk songs.

Activities under the category of audio-visual enjoyment were reported by 8.3% of respondents. They are fond of seeing cinema, if they get an opportunity for this. Most of the Raika men like religious and familial movies, but they don't dislike seeing romantic and action movies also Radio is not quite popular among them. Only two Raikas who were the Nambardar of *dang* were observed carrying radio with them during migration. They used to listen to news and movie songs over it.

Religious activities as pasttime include remembering '*mat-pita-gurudev*', doing mental exercise for remembering God the Almighty (*mala pherna*) singing *bhajans* and songs of Pabuji or Ramdeoji and visiting the *dhunis* of saints/renouncers if they get an opportunity to visit such places.

Other leisure time activities, which account for the participation of small numbers of Raikas are hobby oriented activities and deviant activities. Among the hobby-oriented activities fall visiting town or city or village, near to their camp-sites. They are also sometimes observed making rope of jute (*sun*). As for deviant activities, they indulge in taking *bidi*, *chilam*, *gutka* and *bhang*. They also sometimes indulge in activities like gambling and drinking country wine.

#### **Patterns of Leisure during Sedentary Part of Life**

For 3 to 4 months in an year, Raika men live in their *dhani*. During this time, their pattern of leisure differs from that during migration.

Raikas are more relaxed during their sedentary period. Most of them can get more than two hours of leisure, while about half of them enjoy more than three hours of leisure every day.



### **Priority of Leisure and Recreational Activities during Sedentary Period**

Although the time spent on leisure during sedentary period was more than that during migration, the pattern of leisure is more or less the same. They enjoyed group oriented activities (31.7%), family oriented activities (25%) and quietist activities (15%) in order of preference, and these activities are the same as described earlier. 10% of respondents indulged in artistic and cultural activities. It included a wide range of activities such as visiting and enjoying *melas*, where they go for merry making and enjoying delicious food items. They are also fond of playing on musical instruments like *dhap*, *dhol* and flute doing disguise shows (fancy dress) during the festival of Holi and singing folk song.

Their religious activities during sedentary period include, doing *bhajan*, remembering God (*mala pherna*), doing mental exercise (*sadhna* or meditation), organizing and attending singing sessions of Pabujia and so on. Some of them prefer to engage in economic and self - employing activities during their leisure hours. It includes, working on agricultural land, visit to market, work in factories, improvement of domestic living, basket making, house building or work as labourers. They prefer these activities because their economic condition is quite weak and these activities help them in making some supplementary income for their living.

Quite a small numbers of Raikas prefer watching T.V. and indulging in deviant activities. On T.V., they prefer seeing movies, filmy songs and sometimes news. Their deviant activities include taking *bhang*, smoking *bidi*, taking *gutka* gambling and drinking liquor.

Apart from leisure time activities, Raikas have long and deep-rooted tradition of art and culture. They have their own way of expressing themselves in the form of folk songs, folk art, music and dances. It is desirable to throw some light on this aspect of their social life.

### **Folklore & Folkart**

Folklore is the oral literature of simple societies and is transmitted through oral tradition. Folk art is the traditional way of transmitting stories, folksongs and aesthetic pictorial expressions from one generation to the other. Anthropologists perceive tribal artistic life is reflected mainly through three forms of their art: (1) Oral literature, (2) Music and dance, and (3) Art and drawings. (Vidhyarthi, L.P. and Rai, Vinay Kumar, 1985)

### **Music and Dance**

Folksongs, music and dance of a community reflects the culture of a community. For every occasion Raika have different folksongs like lifecycle songs or social songs, moral songs, seasonal songs, occasional songs, religious songs, working songs, historical songs.

Folk-dance is a rhythmic expression of primitive people in which they happily participate. Its basic quality is its rhythm and the expression of joy. While women wear *kurti*, *kanchli*, *lugdi* and *ghaghra* of bright colours with shining frills on them,

men wear white *dhoti* and *kurta*, with colourful turbans. Drum, as a musical instrument, plays an important part in the performance of these dances. All dances whether during marriage or festive occasion or in a social or ritualistic function, have to be accompanied by one or more drums.

### Folk Stories

Folk Stories: Raikas are fond of telling and listening stories. Sentimental, heroic and romantic songs and ballads, which in their local dialect are called *gatha*, in which stories are narrated in simple words. Most famous love stories which are frequently narrated among them are Dhola-Maru, Nagji-Nagwanti, Nihalde-Sultan, Jallal-Boobna, Amalde-Kheenwaji, Saini-Beejan, Kechabi, Moomal and Jethwa-Ujli. Most popular ballads of chivalriamongst them are Pabuji, Gogaji, Tejaji, Dungji, Jawarji. They are sung partly in prose and partly in poetry.

### Hindu Calendric Segment

Influence of religion on all walks of life in the rural community is so pervading that the spheres of leisure and recreation cannot remain untouched. The sphere of religion may be considered a separate segment of rural life in itself, so far as leisure and recreation are concerned. It is true of Raikas, though they are semi-nomads. Festivals are celebrated collectively whether they are on migration or in their settlement.

Apart from these regular celebrations, they have occasion to observe some other festivities. Socio-cultural occasions like birth, marriage etc. also give them opportunity to entertain themselves. Group participation is the main element of such celebrations. Being semi-nomads, returning of *dera* to the village is itself an opportunity to celebrate. They do *sabha*, where they serve and share opium. Sometimes they observe 'all-night' religious sessions of singing and dancing. Women at any hour of the day, collect to sing and dance. Application of *mehandi* on their hands and feet in beautiful designs and preparing *mandhana* (floral designs) on the floors of their house (particularly at the floors of the entrance room) seem to be one of the favourite activities of the women folk at every festive occasion.

It would be appropriate to present a brief description of the festivals and festivity of the Raikas. The highlight of the celebrations are mainly in terms of feasts (special dishes), fasts, singing of songs and story telling etc.

New year of Raikas begins with Akha Teej, which comes on the third day of the bright half of the month of Baisakah. Mass marriages take place on this day and Raikas prefer to celebrate betrothals on this day. Delicious food like *dana*, *puree*, *seera*, *lapsi* is cooked on this day. In Jaith (May-June) MammaiMata is worshipped. Every body can't enter the temple of Mammai Mata. Only male Raika members worship the goddess. Coconut, sugar-wafers, *gulgulas* are cooked and offered to the goddess. She is worshipped, for the well being of cattle. In Bhadon (August-September), GogaNavmi is celebrated. On this day a fair is also organised at village Maideein Nohar Tehsil. Gogaji is worshipped by *poori*, *mithai*, and *gulgulas*.

It is also called Gogakirasoi (Kitchen of Gogaji) GogaNavmiis celebrated so that Raikas and their children are prevented from possible snakebite.

One fortnight of the Hindu month of Asauj(September-October) is considered as holy for remembering the dead ancestors and for offering them food and clothes. Kanagatare deserved during this fortnight and special food like *dana*, *puree*, *lapsi* is cooked and is offered to Brahmin if possible. Navratra or Nortriyafalls immediately after Kanagat. It is also celebrated from first to the ninth day in the bright half of Asoj. Raikas do fast on these days and generally, it is performed collectively. Fifteen or twenty days before Navratra, they assemble and decide whether, they have to observe Navratrafast or not. It is not necessary that every Raika have to do Navratra. But if some families decide to do so in the hamlet, each such family has to contribute some money towards the expenses of the festivals. This is a nine-day long festival. On the first day they invoke Goddess Durgaand establish Navratrain the temple of Goddess within their hamlet.

Dushehra also falls in Asoj(September-October). No celebration like that of other Hindu castes is made by Raikas on Dushehra. Some of them just go to see the burning of Rawanain the village. DhanTerasis celebrated on thirteenth day of dark fortnight of Kartika. New utensils are purchased and brought home on this day. Lamps are lighted on cross roads and special dishes like *seera* and *lapsi* are cooked at home. Diwalioccurs in Kartik(October-November). It is a festival of light and is celebrated with full enthusiasm. Goddess Laxmijiis worshipped on this day. *Puree*, *dana* and *lapsi* is cooked and served in each home. Candles or *diya* are lit and decorated around the house. In Magha(Jan-Feb), Basant Pacnhmi(spring festival) is celebrated and yellow rice is cooked as part of meals. Shiv-Ratriis celebrated in Phagun(Feb-March). Fast is observed on this day and *bhajan - kirtan* is performed as a part of worship for Lord Shiva. Holialso occurs during Phagun(Feb-March). It is celebrated with great joy and fun fare and colours are thrown on each other as in any of other Hindu caste. Raikas dance on the beat of drum when Holi(bonfire) is burnt. Women folk sing songs, men do *garbha*. Disguise shows are also conducted. In the month of Chaitra (March-April), Basorais celebrated. Raikas worship Sheetla Matato prevent children from small pox. During the rituals women tell stories to each other in praise of Goddess Sheetla Mata. Fried food (*gulgulas*, *pakodi*, *rabdi*) cooked on previous day is served both to the Goddess and to members of family. Fresh food is forbidden on this day.

Raikas celebrate festivals collectively, but not with members of other caste because they lives in separate *dhani* on the outskirts of village and thus their interaction with villagers is minimum.

### **Visit to Fairs (mela)**

Fairs are occasions, which give an opportunity for communal gatherings and celebrations. Although various fairs differ in timings, venue, distance from the village but all of them have social, religious, economic and recreational functions. In a way, these functions motivate Raikas to visit fairs. It is a form of public entertainment held in a large open area. Raikas often travel from one town to another to attend such fairs.

Fairs are organized on prefixed days of a particular month in an year. Pushkarfair is organized during Kartika and is at its full bloom on Purnima. In this fair, various animals including camels, cows and ox are sold. Communal gatherings are held here and Raika leaders address their caste members to make them aware about their rights. It is 192 km. away from their villages. Another important *mela* is Jhalrapatanfair. It is organized at Jhalrapatan, which is about 400 km. away from their village. This is also organized on Kartika Purnima. Here also animals like camel, cow and ox are sold. This fair is not as famous as the Pushkarfair. Apart from buying and selling of animals or pastoral products there are other attractions of these fairs. These are source of great entertainment like swings, delicious food items and a common market to buy and sell items of daily use. Other fairs held on Kartika Purnima are Kolayatfair, held at Kolayatin Bikaner and Bateshwarfair held at Bateshwar in U.P. In these fairs also transaction of animals takes place on large scale. Tejajifair is organized at Parvatsarin Bhadava. Maninathfair is organized in Chaitrain Tilwara. These places are approximately a 100 km. away from their village. Religious fairs are also held like fair of Meera, is organized in Chaitra in Medta which is about 150 km. away from their village. The fair of Jogmayais organized on Kartika Purnima when Raikas observe *bakra* (singing religious songs) almost the whole day. During the month of Shraavan a fair is organized at Shiva Temple near Sanderav. From 2.00 p.m. onwards-devotional singing sessions are held which continue till next morning.

Almost all the respondents interviewed showed their interest in visiting these fairs. They always look forward for an opportunity to visit fairs. The social function of a fair is to provide a common meeting place for old friends and acquaintances. It helps in developing brotherhood feelings among members of community. These fairs fulfill economic functions as they provide market for buying and selling of pastoral commodities. Common market (*hat*) is also held during such fairs, where commodities like dress, bangles, ornaments, utensils and so on are bought and sold at one place. Fairs also fulfill religious functions because many fairs are associated with some religious deity or place, and in these fairs primary objective of Raikas is to have *darshan* (observance) of the deity. Some of the religious fairs are fair of Meera, fair of Ramdeoji, fair of Jogmaya, fair of Shiva and fair of Rampeer. Fairs have recreational functions as well. During these fairs, Raikas get a pleasant change from their hectic and struggle some nomadic life. They indulge in fun and frolic and take part in diverse sorts of merriment and mass entertainment such as swings, puppet show (*katputli*) dances, petty purchases and delicious foods. According to the statistics collected during this study it transpired that almost 90% of Raika men take pride and pleasure in visiting *mela* or *fair* whenever such opportunity is at hand.

### Gossiping

It is a much-needed diversion to feel light after a day's hard labour. It can be termed as a universal phenomenon, which refers to chatting with neighbours, kin, friends, co-workers and is characterized by lighthearted talking, casually

and informally touching any topic. It involves sitting together under sun or under the shade just to pass the time.

According to the responses received from Raika men \ timings of gossip ranged between 2 hours to 4 hours a day. Men folk generally get time for gossiping in evening while sitting together at *chaupalor* sometimes in the afternoon while grazing the animals or while working in agricultural fields.

Gossip groups is generally made with family members (such as children, and other family members), neighbours co-workers, friends.

**Gossip Content:** Gossip content of male group is shown in the following table.

**Gossip Content**

Male Groups N=120		
Content	Frequency (f)	%
Economic Topics	60	50
Social Topics	30	25
Familial Topics	12	10
Cultural & Religious topics	18	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

The study revealed that men folk are concerned more about economic affairs such as problems of grazing land, agricultural land, crops, cattle, and earning sources, which are the most inevitable part of gossip.

#### **Discussion and Conclusion:**

It can be concluded that the leisure time activities of Raikas are in consonance with the description of various traditional leisure enjoyed by individuals or groups in communities in general, except that among them there are no hierarchical leisure time activities.

Raikas, as we now see lead a simple and austere life. They have limited opportunities and almost no exposure to the modern advancement of science and technology. Their whole life is spent in meeting the essential requirements of living, and keeping the body and soul together. They have very little time for leisure and entertainment, and whatever passes in the name of recreation; collective enjoyment or leisure sharing is crude and unsophisticated. Even in their hectic schedule they do find some time for recreational diversion, although their work and leisure are just complimentary to one another.

Being a pastoral group, the main bread earning activity of Raikas rotates around animal herding and migration in search of animal feeds. On the other hand their leisure time activities are simple but varied. They are simple because their economic status does not allow them to enter into costly and complicated entertainment. They therefore, devise simple forms of recoupment and restoration of their energy by uncomplicated forms of entertainment such as indoor games, religious meditation or even gossiping and idling, which cost almost nothing.

Thus, through their leisure time activities, Raikas unconsciously try to conserve their traditions and culture. The repetitive and almost compulsive outburst of folk songs as part of the expression of their happiness during recesses, works towards preserving their community traditions Raikas do not have hierarchical leisure because of the fact that during leisure activities the rudimentary hierarchy that exists among them melts into a community being.

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