Chapter: 4
Folk Culture of Siddis: Cultural Identity

The folk culture of African diaspora in India represents a multidimensional entity essential for production and re-production of Diasporic identity. It is a pool required by Siddis to survive in odd circumstances. The folk culture of Siddis can be analysed in the wider framework of Antonio Gramsci and Edward Said. These scholars have redefined the various sheds of culture provided by modernism. As a result, the folk culture has attained new dimensions from localized lifestyle of subsistence to resistance oriented instruments. The alternative definitions and frameworks can be located in the concept of hegemony. In this context, the identity of African diaspora has been redefined by folk cultural tools to challenge the hegemonistic mainstream tools from creating retrogressive stereotype identity of African diaspora in Asia in general and India in particular.

4.1. Context of Folk Culture

Joseph V. Femina says, "Gramsci that the supremacy of social groups or class manifests itself into two different ways: domination or coercion, and intellectual or moral leadership. This later type of supremacy constitutes hegemony. Social contro, on the other hand, takes two basic forms: besides influencing behaviour or choice externally, through rewards and punishments, it also affects them internally, by moulding personal convictions into replica of previous norms. Such internal control is based on hegemony which refers to an order in which common social and moral language is spoken, in which one concept of reality is dominant, informing with its spirit all modes of thought and behaviour."

Further, Dominic Strinati points out, "Gramsci also noted the failure of economic crisis to rise to political and ideological crisis favourable to the cause of socialism and working class. This suggested that economic crisis themselves would not subvert capitalism and that it was just as important to class struggles to be political and cultural, to be struggles over hegemony, as well as economic and industrial. The failure of working class insurrections is traced by Gramsci to the fact that bourgeois hegemony

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remained intact, and the counter hegemony of socialism had not made strong enough to ensure that the economic crisis of capitalism would also become political and ideological crisis.”

Similarly, Edward Said analyzed the European capitalist colonialism by dissecting Orientalism. Said argued that the Europe was able to dominate Asia politically for a long time due to construction bias with respect to Asian’s language, history and culture.

The history of dialectics between classical and folk culture reflect the two way aspect of culture. Earlier, the diffusion and construction of culture was understood as a linear process. The issue of struggle raised by Adham Khan to eliminate Akbar as Badashah of Mughal Empire represents elements power of folk culture. Adham had planned a conspiracy to attack the monarch in the late midnight. Harbans Mukhia points out the popular culture reflected in the reaction of Akbar, “You catamite, why did you kill my Ataka?” Action swiftly followed the words, and in one step sharp blow of the fist Akbar crushed the ambitious intruders; he then had him thrown off the fort wall twice over, if only to make sure. The word translated here as catamite sounds innocuous, if a bite impolite in English but is deadly in its original Hindawi, picked up straight from the gutter. Clearly, Akbar’s command of Persian did not quite match the intensity of the moment.”

4.1.1. Characteristics of African Folk Culture

The sustenance and reproduction of Siddi folk culture is primarily rooted in the context of medieval world and Karnataka’s forest area. In medieval India, they had adopted the two processes in Middle East before forceful migration known as Africanization of Islam and Islamization of Africa. David Robinson says, “The companion process to the Islamization of Africa was the Africanization of Islam. By this I mean, the various ways that, at different times over the past 1,400 years, Islam has been appropriated or articulated in particular societies; to put it another way, how African groups have created Muslim space or made Islam their own. The process is same one as happened in the world that became Muslim or indeed throughout the world that became Christian or Buddhist or any another persuasion. There is nothing pejorative about the

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africanization of Islam or more appropriately Berberization or Swahili-ization or Whateve-ization of Islam. There is something pejorative about the way that Europeans and many Mediterranean based Muslims have perceived ‘African Islam’ and ‘Africanization of Islam’.4

Regarding medieval Karnataka, Jyotsna K. Kamat says, “Music, dance, drama, debate, discussions, painting and singing formed the entertainment of prince Megakumara. King Somesvara was a great musicologist and musician and seems to have a good dancer as well. He elaborately describes dances called Jalasayana, which finds mention in the Parsavnath Purana also. According to him, the king should direct dance performers and should also participate full of emotional rapture. At a state banquet in the Chola court (1225 A.D.), Chau-ju-kua noticed that the prince and ministers and others broke into music, song and dancing. This indicates that singing and playing of instrumental music formed an integral part of a dance.”5

The ancient and medieval south India was primarily dominated by courtly culture. The Deccan has a rich history of cultural traditions (classical/folk) supported by political/religious establishment in different time periods. Karnataka has excelled in the field of music and dance. In the field of music, Karnataka played important role in the establishment of Carnatic music.

The context of Siddi folk culture must be contextualized in the Western Ghats, where most of the Siddi settlements are located. This forest zone has provided shelter to various tribes in Karnataka such as Gwali, Kuruba etc. The tribes get various products from the forest products as this area is covered by tropical evergreen to deciduous plants. The natural resources available in the catchment areas of rivers such as Tungbhadra, Kaver and Krishna keep them pastoral based society. In the case of Uttara Kannada, Dharwad and Belgaum, the settlements of Siddis are established in the forest zone. As the route comes in the jurisdiction of Karnataka Forest department, the mobility of Siddis in the mainstream areas is always checked. During the field survey, I had to take permission of local police station to visit Siddi settlements. Therefore, the space provides structure for continuous construction of folk culture to maintain identity.

4.1.1.1 Scarifies and Offerings

The close symbolic relationship exists between fire and birth: "Child is the product of successful firing", since he is considered to be a clay utensil that has been fired and has not cracked. Several indications show that it is a question of moderated firing as opposed to a series of dangerous overheatings. Sickness is the result of excessive heat; the word hola used to designate the recovery of a sick person, is also applied to a cooking pot, heated by fire, which is put aside to cool. During mensuration a women suffers from dangerous heat. The blood of women who has suffered a miscarriage is particularly dangerous because it affects rainfall. It causes the blowing up of the scorching winds that dry up the countryside. Any sexual heat is defined as to some extent as a release of heat, and this is liable to become dangerous for society in certain circumstances.

Luc De Heusch observes, "The Hamba and Tetla depict these spirits as beings radically different from men, just as the Lele describe the mingehe spirits. They haunt both the springs and abandoned villages. In any case, contact with them is dangerous and no positive cut permits conciliation with them. Among the Tetela the healing rites practiced by the Wetshi Okunda (both a divine and medicine man) all essentially based on exorcism. The cross road is the privileged place for this expulsion. One might define, it as an anti-altar, at the border between the world man and that of the spirits." 6

The birth of twins is one of the principle threats of drought. The twins mother is impure and other women must avoid contact with her possessions. The impurity that affects twins and their mother is an excess of heat; hence, the evil which means man as well as nature must be fought with the signs of antifire (i.e water, ashes). The birth of twins must then be interpreted as an excessive intrauterine firing placed under the sign of heavily fire. In order to lessen the danger of twins' birth, the Thonga formerly killed the weakest infant.

African culture is dominated by mythology and most common myths in sub-Saharan Africa is the myth of the origin and death, but also of the origins of disease and suffering and decision between the earth and the sky and the separation between mankind and the creator sky good. This form of myth links the origins of death to the wider structure of the universe and hence is cosmogenic in intent. Many African creation myths begin by depicting a divine sky world against which the human earthly world developed through acts of human opposition to the creator god. The origin of mortality is thus explained the different forms of wider cosmic and moral polarities between sky and earth, divinity and humanity, and life and death, which characterize traditional African cosmology.

The importance lies in its cosmogenic dimension. The story explains why the Baganda live in a three story universe consisting of sky, earth and underworld. Each of these realms signifies a different mode of being. As the realm of divinity the sky (ggulu) is known as olubaale, or abode of gods. The earth is the realm of Baganda and is synonymous with land and country. This is the realm of the descendants of Kintu who live in the underworld (magmbe) is the realm of dead where the spirits of the dead (mizime) presents themselves to walumbe before returning to earth where they hover round their graves. The three realms stand in a certain kinship relation. The sky is the domain of ggulu, the father god, and was the original domain of Naambi, the primordial mother; the earth is the realm of Kintu, the primordial father; and the underworld is the domain of walumbe, the primordial mother and brother. The structure of the cosmology expresses the origin and nature of man.

"Brute force has never been the weapon of the Sor. Their cult of the spirits of the dead, working deeply within their society, constitutes also an inner power and authority for the whole community, besides helping to protect them from intruders." Thus, a basic theme in their lives is the recognition of an immortal society of the dead Sor who habit certain caves in the upper reaches of the mountains. These throng of the dead are ever present in the mountains and visible to

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the initiated, the core of Sor belief being that the dead can meet the initiated living. This seems to lead to a certain mitigation of the horror of death, which threatens persistently through drought, famine, disease and human aggression.

Similarly, A.K. Abasi observes, “To render properly the Kasena concept of a burial place (cemetery or graveyard) one should speak not of a grace but of the decedents or the founders’ burial house or burial room. By its name and use the burial house points to particular Ancestor and his household community; it is the founding ancestors’ house, with many different rooms inhabited by his deceased descendants. There are three different burial rooms in the descendant’s burial house; the founders burial rooms, the open burial room and the filled in or simple burial room. In each of these a particular category of deceased is being buried.”

Regarding burial practice in Akans, Kwame Arhin states, “Next the body was put into the coffin lastly before nailing the lid, the head of the family poured a libation with the following prayer: let your family have long life and health, may we get money from your funeral. Don’t let any of us fall sick. May the woman bear children, the lid was then nailed down, and, to the accompaniment of wailing, the coffin was borne by the younger man of the family to the clan graveyard at the cemetery.” The rituals events occur within three days of death, on the fourth day, there is general washing, drinking and singing, and the family goes round to thank those who assist at the funeral. On the fifth day the fast observes since the death was broken. The sixth day was known as the day of rising, sole da. A temporary hut is built on the outskirts of the village or town on which the spokesman, or counselor Okeame, of the occupant of the stool of the village or town pourre a libation, offer a prayer and scarified sheep for general distribution to the community.

4.1.1.2 Celebration of Black Cultures

The significance of cultural elements is an essential quality of humans being. All beings are signs, expressing to the beholder, either their own nature, over

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and above this, their contingency towards other beings. Thus, the perception of an object having a certain color shape and movement reflects that there is smoke; and smoke in turn, suggests fire. This may be called natural significance. Man is a being that achieves a self knowledge, and this he does by importing significance to the phenomena of his experience.

Symbols appeal to experience in society, culture and history, and therefore, it is altogether natural that they should find expression in action, particularly collective action, and action which is a process of greater or lesser duration. It is dramatization of ideals, values and expectations, a bridge between the level of ideas and the level of practical daily life. The study of rituals lies in the key to an understanding of the essential constitution of human societies. The symbolism, and especially, ritual symbolism is the means by which a man shares his inmost experiences with other men. Through ritual man is able to express his innermost experiences with others. Through ritual man is able to express values which are otherwise not expressible and to experience them as shared.

A ritual provides a continual possibility of synthesis, and there is a repeated ebb and flow between inferiors seeking structural superiority and superiors seeking the freedom of communities. The redressive ritual, as its name implies, exists to redress calamity an affliction which has brought about a crisis on the affairs of social group. This may be a natural disaster which affects every member of the group, or it may be a sickness or affliction that has befallen an individual who thereupon becomes the symbol of the tensions within the community. After lengthy process of divination which reveals what social structures are involved and what the details of the relevant micro-history are a ritual is performed which is designed to make hidden tensions explicit and to restore the status quo ante.

A life crisis ritual, on the other hand, is less concerned with society as a whole than with the individual entering a superior ritual and social status. Such ritual introduces the candidate into a specific community, cult association or category, and the theme of suffering as a means of entry into this category is stressed. Circumcision and puberty rituals various other forms of initiation, and funerary rituals are covered under life crisis ritual category all of this type.
The articulation of myths, ritual has been fossilised to celebrate the blackness. Jan Knappert says, “The name zanzibara derives from the Persian word Zanzi-bara, coast of the black peoples, and was formerly applied to entire coast but when Zanzibar became it capital, it took the name all the itself, instead of its old Swahili. Zanji Bara formed the opposite coast to that of Mala-barra, the coast of Malayalam people’, the west coast of southern India.”

Similarly, B. Nicolini says, “The Periplus, moreover, also, provides a description of the inhabitants of the African coast called Azania stating that they were very tall and devoted to piracy. There are, however, many doubts as to the authenticity of the document. Another important place of testimony is that provided by Ptolomy in the second century who tells of the presence of populations going by the name zingi who were settled along the African coasts as far as the gulf of Babaria that is to say, south of cape Guardafui. The term zanj has been also identified as being of Persian origin from zangik meaning black” The dehumanization of blackness by the European exploration gradually paved way to the emergence of counter force.

Jemima Pierre depicts, “The Neur are one with their cattle, the two species all caught up in a relationship so close that it is difficult to separate out humans from animals. Relatedly, the Mbiti Pygmies are one with the forest particularly the blackness of the forest – and all so connected to it that they can potentially fade into these descriptions, one finds a direct link to a late nineteenth century images of the dark skinned savage as well as attendant racialist assumptions about Africans relationship to nature, their bio-moral characteristics and their primitiveness. The sentiments reflected in the above passages are not unique moments in the texts. Infact, Evans-Pritchard’s photographic representations of the nuer have a similarly disturbing effect.

The African renaissance created a new formulation known as black is beautiful. The intellectuals rejected the imposed universality of white

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supremacy. Lucus Outlaw observes, “In the Aforcentric idea Asante continued his articulation of afro-centricity. In this context afro centricity is further defined and deployed as a critique that propounds a cultural theory of society by the very act of criticism and proposes a cultural reconstruction that incorporates the African perspective as a part of an entire human transformation.” The object of critique is eurocentricism, that is, the preponderant myths of universalism, objectivity and classical traditions (that retain) a provincial European cast. Afro-centric analysis will re-establish the centricity of the ancient Kemetic (Egyptian) civilization and the Nile valley cultural complex as points of reference for an African perspective on much the same way as Greece and Roman serve as reference points for the European world.

4.1.2 Indo-African Relations in Folk Culture

4.1.2.1 Africans as Navigators in Indian Ocean.

Indian Ocean represents the rich shared history of indo-African civilization. It provided a channel for creating a shared space. Along the shores of the western Indian Ocean relations between the people of Asian, Arabian and East African coasts were innumerable and stretched back to times immemorial. Such links and relations of power were to be sought in those elements which constituted the close equilibrium of the western Indian Ocean, that is, the monsoons, the presence of commercial thalassocracies, the predominance of mercantile laws, the trade routes of spices and ivory the European desires for consequent of commercial monopolies the slave trade.

B. Nicolini narrates, “Among the many Indian merchants trading at Muscat and in the Gulf during the 19th century there were the Bhatta, originally from Rajasthan (from Bhatti, Subbatta, Hindu warriors of the Vashist caste). Another group of Bhatta were the katch again Hindu, who, in the 17th century enjoyed great prestige at Muscat and who were exempted from taxation by the Arabs. Together with these groups of merchants, there were also the Khoja, who were Ismaili from kutch and from kathiawar. In foreign and sea going trade marginally Muslims were...

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employed (Bohra term used in Rajasthan for a Sahukar, trader, User, Khoja) while Jain and Hindus (Baneja and Bhatta) were dominant in the banking and finance fields".13

Ibn Batuta testifies to the mighty role of Africans as navigators. Kevin Shillington says "The peoples of Azania were clearly experienced fishermen, who practiced on the use of small boats, along the coastal waters offshore. They fished and caught turtles from dugout canoes and they sailed among the islands in small coastal boats made of wooden planks knotted together with lengths of coconut fibre. Each market town was under the rule of its own chief, though the Periplus tells us little more about the people except that they were darkskinned and they were tall".14

B. Nicolini refers, "The extraordinary extent of east Africa’s maritime trade is also demonstrated by finds of Sung dynasty Chinese porcelain of the 12th century along the coast at Kilwa, and on the islands of Pate. Nonetheless, between 1405 and 1433 seven Chinese fleets set to sail under the command of the famous admiral, Chen Ho, a military leader who had been made a eunuch at the stage of ten and assigned to the emperor’s personal service".15

Edward Alpers says ‘In the Islamic lands of the northwest Indian ocean, Africans could be found as sailors, in military retinues, and as domestic servants and urban workers in the most important port cities and at Mecca. Most were enslaved, but other was free. Among the former, some of them were eunuchs who raised to high position in Arabian society, as for example the keepers of the Kaaba in Mecca. African military slaves in the Hadramut, in modern Yemen, for example, were still an important component of the local political scene as late as the 1930s. From the late 18th century right through the following century, however, as this part of the world economy that was driven by the industrial revolution in Europe and America, the demand for slaves increased significantly in ways that were quite different from previous experience, including that of India".16

4.1.2.2 Images of Jamal-ud-din-Yaqut

13 Nicolini, n. 11 p. 36.
15 Nicolini, n. 11 p. 67.
Jamal-ud-din Yaqut was the first Abyssinian who carved out a well placed political space in the Delhi Sultanate. He was one of the most favorite and trusted right hand man of Iltutmish, the sultan. A.L. Srivastava says, "She took steps to emphasize the firmness and vigour of her rule. She commanded armies and took part in battles. Such conduct in a woman, though a queen, appeared scandalous to the hoary Turkish warriors. She is also said to have shown an undue preference for an Abyssinian officer, Jamal-ud-din Yaqut, who held the office of her master of the Stables (Amir-i-Akhur"\textsuperscript{17}). Ibn Battuta also mentions that Razia sultan’s fondness for the Abyssinian was criminal. Fereshta’s only allegation against her is that a very great degree of familiarity was observed to exist between the Abyssinian and the Sultan, so much so, that when she rode he always lifted her on house by raising her up under arms.

R.C. Majumdar analyses, "The queen was not, however, destined to enjoy a peaceful reign. The undue favour shown by her to the Abyssinian scare Jamal-ud-din Yaqut who was elevated to the post of master of the stables offended the Turkish nobles who were organized on a close corporation"\textsuperscript{18}. The Siddis of Karnataka have rebrushed various icons that could play crucial role for the cultural capital. Though, Jamal-ud-din-Yaqut played important role in central India, the Siddis of Karnataka have incorporated Yaqut in the iconic figures. They feel proud that Jamal played not only important role politico-economic point of view, but also he carried on the legacy of Africa for gender equality.

4.1.2.3 Images of Malik Ambar

Malik Ambas also played such a significant role on the history of the Decean, and became eventually such a thorn in the flesh of the Mughals. B.N. Goswamy informs, "Born in mid-sixteenth century at Harur in Ethiopia, and known simply as ‘Chapu’ he was sold by his poor parents to an Arab slave merchant landed up in Baghdad, and from there, in the early 1570s, on the Decan-known for its polyglot and tolerant culture, which included many blacks or ‘Habshis’ as they were

\textsuperscript{17} A.L. Shrivastava, \textit{History of India} (New Delhi: Kanishka publishers, 1995), p. 50.
\textsuperscript{18} R.C. Majumdar and others, \textit{An Advanced History of India} (New Delhi: Macmillan India Ltd, 2000), p.278.
called (from the Arabic world 'Habsh' for Abyssinia, the older name of Ethiopia) where he was sold again to a prominent noble at the troubled court of the Nizam shahs of Ahmednagar\textsuperscript{19} The context of Ambar becomes evident when, Mughal forces, fired by Akbar's ambitious plans to bring the south also under his control, were knocking at the very portals of the Deccan. Ahmednagar had relatively weak king on the throne bitter rivalries at the court where factionalism was rife. The Abyssinians constantly flexing their muscles, an enemy at the gates; it was nearly prefect ground in which a man like malik Ambar- the name was given to him by a former master.

In the 17\textsuperscript{th} century, Murtaza Nizam Shah was made king of Ahmednagar. The two famous officers Malik Ambar an Abyssinian and Mian Raji Dakhani, in spite of the presence of the Mughal forces, held the territory for about 20 years. Malik Ambar was the regent of the Nizam Shah from 1607 to 1626. During this period he increased the strength and power of Murtager Nizam Shah and raised a large army. He changed the capital from Paraanda to Junar and founded a new city; Khadki which was later changed to Aurangabad by the emperor Aurangzeb when he involved the Deccan (1658-1707), Malik Ambar thrust defeats on the Mughal General Khan Khanan many times and attacked Ahmednagar often.

Lakhuji Sadhavrao, Maloji Bhosale, Shahji Bhosale and other Maratha chiefs had gained great prominence during this period and with the help of these maratha chiefs. Malik Ambar had captured Ahmednagar fort and town from the Mughals. But in the of the battles Malik Ambar was defeated by the Mughals and had to lose the fort of Ahmednagar, many Maratha chiefs and especially Lakhuji Jadhavrao joined the Mughals. Shah Jahan, prince of Delhi, once again laid a crushing blow to Malik Ambar in one of the battles and further decreased his power. Malik Ambar was a great startsman and soldier. He humbled the might of the Mughal and Adil Shah of Bijapur and raised the falling status of the Nizam Shah. Though defeated by the Mughals he was never cowed down by their might, he died in 1626 at the age of eighty.

\textsuperscript{19} The Tribune, 13 August 2006.
The Mughals always dreamt to subdue the local states of Deccan and especially the Habshis under the leadership of Malik Ambar. On the other hand, the Habshis had carved formidable pockets of political power and the seat of power in Janjira was unimaginable for the Mughals. Jahangir was a renowned painter and the painters of Mughal court carved out a solution in the form psychological victory by locating the victory in the formulation of divine and dynasty.

B. N. Goswamy says, “But a painter at the Jahangiri court the greatly gifted Abul Husan realized for his patron a triumphal dream, for he painted for him an allegory, in which emperor is seen standing atop the globe of the world and shooting an arrow through the severed head of Malik Ambar, that is, impaled on a tall pike. The event never came about of course, but looking at the painting must have give the emperor great satisfaction. For woven in to it are subtle references and remarkably flattering allusions. While on the hapless head of Ambar an owl sits and then falls along the pike as the arrow goes through the open mouth of the black general, a bird from paradise descends from the heavens and heads towards the emperors crown placed on a tall golden structure at right, as if to add its own feathers to it.”

The Siddis of Karnataka annually visits to the various important cultural places related to Malik Ambar such as tomb of Malik Ambar’s wife at Khuldabad, Ambar’s tomb at Khuldabad, Malik Ambar’s grave at medical college campus, Aurangabad etc. He has been glorified and given a status of Siddi superhero who singlehandedly dealt all the major political formation of medieval India.

4.2. Music

The history of music in India dates to Indus Valley Civilization. The clear cut evidence and text are available from Rig Vedic civilization. The period was dominated by Vedic and Gandhrav music. Swami Prajnanda says, “The Vedic music with its various forms and with different numbers of music tones, pratham etc., was practiced by Samaga Brahmins in different revisions of Vedas, and in this way, the singing and practical method of presentation of the samans different from one another, and thus,
saman singing was divided in Samaga communities. Nearly by the side of music, Samagana, there independently evolved the system of the Gandharva music, imagined and designed by the master-Gandharvas, and others."  

Karnataka is very well known for Carnatic music. The term carnatic carnatic is a anglicized form of Karnataka Sanetham. Purandara Das has been given the title of Sangita Pitambha. It’s emergence dates back to 13th century. It has played multidimensional role in the Indian music. After the arrival Turko-Persian culture, the music in north India was hybridized and it was called Hindustani music. On the other hand, the south India had evolved music under various kingdom which was primarily supported by Vijaynagar kingdom and Tipu Sultan. The folk music continuously mutated according by two way process of culture. The strength of folk music lies in the role of cultural capital. Hans Engel says, “Music has the characteristic of communication. Sound spontaneously uttered by an individual serves as a contract sound as a first step toward a call or a shout or as a decoy, wooing or warning call. Both speech and music develop symbols. Speech evolves ideas, which leads to thinking and logic. Music begins with emotional sounds, which are followed by signals and calls that serve different social purposes. Yet, in the animal world, we find a play of sounds which are unrelated to social purpose, as in the songbird.”

4.2.1. Presence of Intercultural Aspect in Siddi music

The Raga formed the basic of melody in Indian music and it consists of seven notes-Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni. Further, The Indian music is accompanied with Talas. There are 32 types of Talas and 120 types of combinations which binds music. Carnatic music concerts are usually performed by a small ensemble of musicians. The group usually has a vocalist, a primary instrumentalist, and a percessionist. The primary instruments are usually a strings instruments such veena and violin, although wind instrument such as flute may also be used. The Tambura, the most common kind of drone instruments, is traditionally used at concerts to remind the singer of the tone, so that the singer may stay in tune throughout the performance. The other instruments are Mridangam, Ghatam, Kanjira etc.

The role of music in Siddi community is subordinate to dance. The folk music has retained the role of transferring cultural capital in the Siddi community. During the field work, the Siddi community waited for at least 2 hours to perform a musical evening in my presence. It reflects dominance of instrumental music that forms a part of folk music, especially dance music. Narrative verses make most part of folk music in the Siddi community. This covers such traditional narrative verse related to the battles of Malik Ambar and other prominent Siddi leader. It is due to this reason that Siddis consider superior to Marathas, though the Siddis are very poor. In the community programmes, the Siddi music is Vir rasa oriented and the narrative revolves around the glorified past in the Bahamani Kingdom.

The term Rasa is first referred in Vedas to imply ‘some juice’/cow milk’/taste/flavour. It was elaborated by Upanisadas, Darshanas and Natyasastra. The sixth chapter of Natyasastrs defines Rasa in this sutra “Vibhavanubhava –Vyabhicari-Samyogad rasa-nispattih”. Dr. R.S. Tiwari says, “Rasa is produced by a combination or commingling together of the Vibhavas, Anubhavas and Vyabhicaris which may respectively be said to be causes or determinates, consequents, or ensuants and transitories or assistants.” There are eight types of Rasa as a product of eight sthayibhava in Indian music.

Table: 31- Rasa and Bhava in India Music

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rasa</th>
<th>Sthayibhava</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Erotic(Srnga)</td>
<td>Love(Rati)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathetic(Karuna)</td>
<td>Grief(Soka)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furious(Raudra)</td>
<td>Wrath(Krodh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heroic(Vira)</td>
<td>Energy(Utsaha)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrible(Bhayanaka)</td>
<td>Fear(Bhaya)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comic(Hasya)</td>
<td>Humour(Hasa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loathsome(Bibhatsa)</td>
<td>Disgust(Jugupsa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marvellous(Adbhuta)</td>
<td>Wonder(Vismaya)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the public programmes, the Siddi music is primarily dominated by Srngara, Karuna, Raudra and Vira rasa. The narratives revolve around the problems faced by Siddis in the day to day life. As most of them are working in forest centric works, therefore, the narratives are built around problem faced from either dominant section of society or Karnataka Forest Department. Another dominant Rasa in Siddi music is Bhakti rasa and the narratives are centered on the Hiriyaru worship. The dominant religions of Karnataka are gradually limiting the Bhakti centric Siddi narratives. Though, The Siddis have forcefully got recognition of Hiriyaru worship in Hinduism, Islam and Christianity.

The following paragraph represents a narrative of Vir rasa in Siddi song:

A) He is not easily met!
   He is like a Lion!
   O Ambar Siddi you are the greatest fighter!
   Accept our Salutations!

It shows domination of Vira rasa with reference to Malik Ambar. The song also build historical narrative of Siddi community.

B) Welcome to Spirits of forefather!
   Salutation to God and Prophet!
   Welcome with playing drums!
   Welcome to Masters of Oceans!
   Welcome to Siddi mother Goddesses!
   Welcome with playing drums

It reflects the domination of Vira and Srngara rasa. The music of Siddi community in Gujarat is also dominated by the Vira and srngara rasa. The following song reflects the Vira rasa:

"The chundadi of mother goddess is red.
   She is spirited,
   And none can don her chundadi.
   Baba Ghor, the Jangli Pir, came from Mecca,
   And is enshrined in Jhagadia,
   Where also lives Mai Misra."
Habs Khan came from Mecca,
And is enshrined in Ratnapur,
Where also lives Mai Khinni
Nagarchi came from Mecca,
Doshal Pir is enshrined in Junagadh,
Where also lives Mai Parsan.\textsuperscript{24}

The Siddis use a musical instrument called Malunga; it is similar to Indian folk instrument Iktara. The length of instrument and use of half-gourd make it different from Indian folk instrument. Amy Catlin-Jairazbhoy describe the historicity of instrument, "Initially used by slaves in Brazil for begging or attracting customers to their master's ware, it's various names and forms prior to nineteenth century can be traced to origins in various parts of Central and Western Africa, especially in Angola and Kongo. Like the berimbao, the string of the malunga is separated into two parts of differing pitches by a tunning noose, or brace tied around both string and bow at a point where octaves result. A resonanting half-gourd is moved nearer and farther from the body to create timber modulations, similar to vocal modulations produced by the mouth when altering the lips from 'ooo' to 'aaa'\textsuperscript{25}.

\textbf{4.2.1.1. Kannada language for Music}

The African diaspora in Karnataka have adopted Kannada language for the music. Kannada is one of the oldest Dravidian languages with an antiquity of at least 2000 years. The spoken language said to have separated from its pivotal Dravidian source earlier than Tamil and about the same time as Tulu. The oldest existing record of Kannada poetry in tripadi metre is the kappe Arabhatta record 700 B.C. The contemporary Kannada literature has been highly successful in reaching people of all classes in society. There are at least 20 dialects of Kannada which includes Kundagannada, Nadavar Kannada, Huryaka, Are Share, Soliga, Badaga, Dharwardd, Kannada etc.

\textsuperscript{24}India, Census of India 1961, Vol V, Part V-B No.1.p. 25
4.2.1.2 Indian Ocean as Zone of Happiness

The African diaspora of India in general and Karnataka in particular celebrates the memories of Indian Ocean. The oral history represents the Indian Ocean as North Star for the construction of past. The ocean is a field of assertion by the Siddis. B.Nicolini says, “The astonishing balance created by the monsoons was achieved over the space of a year with the following rhythm: from December to March the monsoon blows from Arabia and the western Coast of India in the north east pushing as far as Mogadishu. The winds are light and consistent the climate hot and dry. In April the monsoon starts to blow from the south-west, from eastern Africa towards the coast of the Persian gulf, the climate cooler but march more humid.”

The rains consist of short vuli from November to February and heavy masika from March to June while the driest months are November and December. As far as the East African coast and in the islands of the Indian ocean is concerned, the tropical climate is always tempered by sea breezes until the nineteenth century, sailing from Asia and Arabia on November in a south, south westerly direction took thirty to forty days.

4.2.2. Narratives Dominates the Siddis Music

The Siddi music is primarily dominated by narratives built around Sufi shrine, saints, ancestors and pheotypical features etc., at the macro level the Siddis music is primarily part of global African music. The shift of trade in Red Sea during ninth century provided east Africa a chance to participate in the east and West trade. The emergence of European trading Diaspora, further, transplanted the African music in the Atlantic Ocean. As a result the above mentioned factors, the forced migration provided music as the only means healing to the Habsis/Siddis community. The Siddi Sufi saints, further, provided spiritual aspects to the music which attracted a large number of local social forces such as Parsis in India.

26 Nicolini, n. 11 pp. 27-8.
Beheroze Shroff reports regarding Gori Pir Chilla and his father, “The word healing significantly connects me to the question of how and why a Siddi saint Gori Pir and the Siddi of Gujarat intersect with the Parsi communities need to heal their fragmented sense of self and the psychological and spiritual feelings of loss that it entails. I think in turning to Siddis saint Gori Pir, through his medium Maqbool Baba, My father found a meaningful space for healing. The rituals and ceremonies surrounding the veneration of Gori Pir introduced my father to a form of congregational worship with a family of followers is a medium of Gori Pir, Maqbool Baba created a one-on-one bonding with the Goir Pir devotees by holding regular meetings at the chilla. The group worship of the chilla, constructed with the practice of Zoroastrianism, stressed a more individual and solitary worship."

The Siddi community is reconstructing diasporic continentalised image of Africa in the narratives. The music has become the main tool to construct the oral history. As a result, the Siddis of Karnataka are regrouping the folk music on the lines of ballad. The nature of ballads is contemporary marginalization and historical. The talented role, played by the Siddis in the politico-administrative structure of Medieval India, has been made alive by oral history.

The term Siddi has been already been constructed to imply a respected whereas the local people define Siddis as ‘low caste’ people. The diasporic narratives are built around the various stories of Siddis and Ocean. Thus, the Siddi folk music is getting transformed for a universal audience. The Siddi community is relying on the dialogue of universal audience and Siddi folk music to support and sustain the diasporic identity.

4.2.2.1 Music for Social Purpose

The elements of African music have been recognized as the one of the powerful for the continuous supply of cultural infrastructure. For the last 500 years, they have been churned in the dominant tragedy of Karnataka culture. The absence of knowledge based institutions forced the Africans in Karnataka to use cultural instrument constructed and reconstructed on the primordial cultural network. The arena of forest, further, helped them to carry on and celebrate the differentiating aspect of Africans. The post colonial Indian scenario pushed the mainstream

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interaction resulting to delink the traditional lives of consolidation. The imposition of regional and religion based music could not penetrate the nucleus of African elements. It is one of the important reasons that the mainstream societies were gradually forced to accommodate the African music.

The inclusion of African music in the centenary of the canonization of St. Rita cultural programme reflects the abovementioned Brownian movement synthesis. Pashington Obeng says, “The men’s songs and dance were of fusion of symbolic gestures with vignettes of stores from their life situations reduced exclusively in konkani such as the following: Dadle rannha ghele kunbe panna ekhtain korun khatir tenche gharan pasht gallunk (men went into the forest to collect kunbe (broad forest covers) for roofing their house. As they picked the leaves one of them picked up a snake hiding under the fallen leaves. As he showed the snake to the others, he was told not to be afraid; he shook the snake as if it was a mere leaf. At the stage all the dancers made the gesture of picking up the snake and shaking it.”

John Mbiti says, “Many of the religious gatherings and ceremonies are accompanied by singing which not only helps to pass on religious knowledge from one person or group to another, but helps to create and strengthen corporate telling and solidarity. Some of the songs are used in hushing or pacifying babies, other at ceremonies making the birth, initiation, marriage or death of a person; hunters like the Ngombe use religious songs acknowledging their dependence upon god or attributing their success to him.” As with proverbs, the collection and study of religious songs is very scanty, and yet there is another rich area where one expects to find repositories of traditional beliefs, ideas, wisdom and feelings. Music, singing, and dancing reach deep into the inner most parts of African peoples, and many things come to the surface under musical inspiration which otherwise may not be readily revealed.

The music is being also used to bring out the problems faced on day to day

life. The socio-economic marginalization of African diaspora in Karnataka creates a line of alliance; reinforce the diasporic tools and technique for consolidation in the image continentalised homeland in Africa. The sociological analysis of Siddi music provides an indepth understanding of line running under the social carpet. During the field trip, it was realised the Siddi emphasized in the same manner the importance of Siddi music irrespective of regional or religion based demarcations. They out rightly claim that they are from the same stock and the state and society should help them to build the diasporic social conciousness.

4.2.2.2 Tributes to Ancestors

The Ancestor worship is one of the key hallmarks of African legacy in African diaspora. Although, the cultures of Indian subcontinent have well defined space for ancestor worship, but the distinctive aspect of African ancestor worship separates the Siddis pattern of tributes to ancestors particularly as an element of defining religion both at the micro and macro level, and also key for the operation of kinship. Meyer Fortes argues, “Ancestor worship belongs to the region of kinship and descent structure in which law, backed by the sanctions of the political order, regulates social relations and conduct, as opposed to the region patri-filial relationships in which conduct is ruled by moral and spiritual considerations.”30 In this sense, the ancestor worship is an aspect of citizenship on the politico-jural domain, not of membership of domestic groups. It is the same in other matrilineal systems, for example, that of the Nayar of South India and plateau of Tonga. The ancestorhood is conferred on persons of the parental generation who have jural authority in living social relations, not on those who imprint their personalities on their offspring by virtue of their part in bringing them up.

Not only in India, but also the in Africa the impact of ancestor is crystal clear in converted Africans. Marthinus and Danieel analyses, “Though the impact of Christian and other western influences, these rituals have receded into the background and for some have lost their significance. They continue to exit, however, whether in notified form or even when driven underground. Most Shona

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Christians will refer to ancestor worship (pira midzimu) as something of the past, but every so often it becomes apparent that they still participate or at least are present when the spirits are propitiated, especially when the ceremony is conducted to ward off a family crisis. Kinship tells seem to superside religious convictions, be it only for a short period, when Christians all put under pressure by pagan relatives to participate in one or other from of Ancestors worship.  

The Sidis of Karnataka, irrespective of religion pay collective annual tribute apart from individual tubutes as when required. The Hindu, Muslim and Christian Siddis have out rightly maintained the tradition of ancestor worship. The first task of Ancestor worship is to remove all the items offered to the Ancestor the precious year. The Kartha offers fresh coconut completely washed with water and turmeric is smeasured on the Hiriyaru. Before removing the items offered during previous year, a pooja is performed, so that, the items can be taken without being affected by the negative power of Hiriyaru. The fresh cowdung is used to provide a fresh welcome to the Hiriyaru. The Hindu, Muslim and Christian Siddis decorate houses with the scattered elements of respective religions. The Hindu Siddis perform the Hiriyaru worship in the home only whereas the Siddi Muslims are allowed to perform the ancestors worship outside the mosque.

The Muslim Siddis have almost everywhere planted trees to symbolize the Hiriyaru. In the case of Christian Siddis, the church is admant to centrally administer the ancestor worship in the church. T.C. palakshappa says, "The Siddi Christians do not make public show to it. In one of the settlements one informant told me that the priest beat a person for performing the Hirayaru pooja. The priest came to the settlement without warning and noticed the person performing it. Thus, one can visualize a conflict between the Christian faith and the Siddi belief system. The Siddi Christians resent this but they feel they have no alternative but to conform to Christian practice." 

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4.2.2.3 Prayer for Healing

The Siddi music is also oriented for prayer to heal various aspects of Siddi community. The Yoruba’s community use the music regarding healing on obtala festival. Richard M. Dorson elaborates, “The worshipers of obatala gather in the open space (ode) in front of the palace. The Timi, dressed up for the occasion, sits in front of the purh (kotri) surrounded by his retinue. The chorus women; wearing white blouse, white beads, and white headgear, open the performance of the ritual dance drama with the following prologue:

*Whom shall we worship annually? The Igbo divinity, you shall we worship annually you, who proposes and disposes, you shall we worship annually.*

The music for healing is very dominant in all the Siddis of Gujarat and Hindu, Muslim Siddis of Karnataka. The Siddi Sufi shrines of Gujarat have become a centralized space for performing prayers for healing.

The healing process starts with performance of dance and music. The dhammal dance starts the rhythmic movements in the Kartha or Munjavur, simultaneously; the increased rhythmic drum beats intensifies the movements of Kartha. Beheroze shroff informs about Siddi in Mahastra, “Devotes would shower Badshah money, some would hand the money to Makbul Balwa who would call Badshah to him and give him the money with words of blessings. Badshah and another singer Vasanti behn often sing:

“*To phir mang, phir mang khwaja se phir mang, pher mang, phir mang chirst se phir mang. To bichaye rosee kee failee to khuda ke kasum, tu na kabhia jayega khalee*”

4.2.3. Music as Cultural Construction of Emotions

The Siddi music is a rich mine of emotion building elements. The pain of forced movement, imagination of history and various original roles played all being constructed through music. In the absence of educational system, the Africans maintained the knowledge of above mentioned elements in the various faculties of mind. It acts as a part of oral history told and retold from generations to generations.

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The old generations always guided the new generations during various activities of life regarding the hardships and life passed by the Africans.

4.2.3.1 Pain of Slavery:

The African civilization suffered the most barbaric onslaught of slavery in the world. The demographic impact of the slave trade of course, depended on the age and gender of the enslaved perhaps two thirds of those exported were males; plantations owners in the new world preferred youth and young men-none to exceed the years of 25 or under 10 possible. The export of young males had serious social consequences, since the young and strong were exported abroad as a result the proportion of economically productive members declined, and the burden on them became greater.

Olaudah Equiano sadly, mentions the pain of slavery, “Night too, began to approach, and aggravated all my fears. I had before entertained hopes of getting home, and had determined when it should be dark to make the attempt, but I was now convinced it was fruitless, and began to consider that, if possibly, I could escape all other animals. I could not those of the human kind and that, not knowing the way, I must perish in the words. Thus was I like a hunted dear every leaf and every whispering breath, conveyed a foe, and every foe a death.”

Regarding the Siddis of Karnataka, Charles Camara narrates, “A few elderly Siddis do know. Some details about their origin. On 28 January 1996 Krishna Francis Siddi, aged 72, told me his version of his community’s origin: A long time ago a Hindu king brought my ancestors here from a place called Africa. The Hindu king wanted to have strong and hardworking men to work on his property and women to work in his many houses. So he sent ships beyond the horizon and brought our Ancestors. Then the Portuguese came and they brought Sidis to Goa to work on their houses. Then the British came with more Siddi from Africa to work on their army and fight against the Indians.”

The Hindu, Muslim and Christians have located the origin in different trajectories, but the pattern of trajectory is

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deeply rooted in the pain of slavery.

4.2.3.2 Sources of Imagination

In the absence of visual arts, the Siddi community largely relies on the performing arts for the imagination. Imagination of the past is essential ingredient for the construction of diasporic entity. No diaspora can survive in the absence of imagination of past that to when institutional or visual arts is largely absent. Although, the Sufi shrines of Siddi Pir's in Gujarat and various architectures made by African leaders in medieval India such as Malik Ambar have also become base for the visualization of various roles played by the community in the past. Even then, these instruments are largely not accessible to the uneducated and rural Siddi community. In this context, the music transforms into the source of imagination. It creates a virtual history of Siddi. The music along with various dancing performances with the help of imagined dresses helps to construct and enjoy the written past of Siddis.

Amy Catlin observes, "Bara took from ocean, from the sea, and gave to the wise men and friends of Allah. It is joy/waves from the ocean, a gift of waves/ecstasy. The true lord and sovereign, Gori Pir's joy. The true lord says the Saints waves/rapture."37

The Siddis of Karnataka have started repayment of various electrons of imagination in the light of new developments. The coming of Sunjata's ancestors, as collected by Charles Bird, represents the historical aspect of Mande. He describe the song, "They said, Mystery, we found a little old man lying in a chair who could not tell day from night any more because of his great old age, and he said you are older than he, and yet you look robust will not you tell us its meaning? Don't you know what that means? A man should do, what he is able to do, if you try to do, that which you all not able to do, you grow old before your time. And the men of the Mande returned to their home."38

The Siddi Muslims have created music along the structures of created by

Malik Ambar, for example, these lines reflects the same, ‘You created the power of Siddis, Ambar is the powerful Sultan, brought the Siddis, The Siddis calls you’. It is due to this reason that Siddis have been successful in carving out space in mainstream culture, fore example Siddi patt, etc.

**4.2.3.3 Construction of Heroism**

The Vir Rasa is the dominant element of African music Charles Bird refers to the oldest and most widespread song in west Africa. He reports, “Oh! Segeou! One can succeed in segou oh! Segou! There is none who does not go to segou E! even of a double-barreled kind, even if he were a king with a house of bards. You are a great warrior, karadige, but Da was the greatest of warriors.”

The Siddis do accept that they were victimized and are now in poor politico economic conditions. But, the contemporary core of Siddi music is filled with Veer Rasa. The Siddis have constructed the power of blacks in the narratives of songs and rhythms of Siddi dance. In the case of Gujarat, the Gori Pir is one of the most powerful and dynamic religious figure for the Siddis. In Karnataka, the Siddis have carved out the heroism in the past as well as contemporary period. The song titled King of forest represents the inner side of Siddi perception. They have projected themselves as the lord of forest.

Siddi is Lord of forest, no animal speak against Siddi he is the saviour of forest, the brave is a man of the moment, the world will remember the Siddi. The song establishes the complete sovereignty of the Siddi over the forest areas. He is the only saviour of animal and plant kingdom. Therefore, a Siddi represents the brave spirit and the world will always remember the greatness of the Siddi.

**4.3. Dance**

**4.3.1. Context of Dance in Tribes**

Karnataka has a rich history of dances and at least, forty types of dances are being performed in Karnataka. These include Dallu-Kunitha, Somana-Kunitha, patta - Kunitha, Margalu-Kunitha, Gorvara-Kunitha, Lambani-Kunitha, Veerabhadra –Kunitha, Dhammam etc. Dance represents the inner feeling of human beings through body

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39 ibid. p. 477.
movements. In the case of tribals, the body movements play a very crucial role in the day to day affair. The happiness and sorrow ness are expressed through body movement. The Siddi community has maintained a distinctive aspect of African dancing methodology. The dance structure of Karnataka is mainly rooted in the religio-geographic trajectory. The Hindu community has evolved various dances along the lines of sects such as Nandi Dhwaja, Lingada-Berana, Gorava, Beesu Kamsale and these dances are primarily articulated around lord Shiva. Similarly, the worship of Shakti has provided multiple tools for the construction of dances such as Vatte kola, Kombat, Billat, Bhoota Nrutya, Soman Kunitha, and Karaga etc. The Siddi dances can be categorized into two categories: Secular and Religious.

4.3.1.1. Role of Dance in Tribes

Dance plays central role in the world of tribal people. It represents the overall facets of tribal peoples. The emotions and perceptions are very well presented in the society through dance. Dance has multiple role of religio-spiritual and socio-cultura construction. The history of tribes clearly shows that the tribal people used dance as a medium of communication with the divine powers. The imitation of various natural forces through dance was an important tool for taming the natural forces. The methodology evolved by the tribal people is sacrifices.

The evolution of sacrifice as a method for various socio-cultural purposes needed the necessary threshold of rhythm. The rhythm was needed to create an environment so that, all the tribal people can participate in the process. Cuthbert Omari says, “During the sacrificial ceremony for the Mrunju Walu, which lasted for four days, everyone in the clan or family was obliged to participate. The sacrifice consisted of a black bull, a black ram and brown he goat. During those four days sexual intercourse was forbidden the reason being that the sacrifice would otherwise become worthless and the sacrificial animals polluted. Further, beer prepared from four pieces of white and black sugar-cane was offered. The first kind (white) was offered first.”

Mukul Chakrabarti and Dipak Mukherji describe the role of dance in

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Santhals. They say, "the Santhals are a people with very good artistic taste which is very well reflected on the on the decorated walls of their huts. They are also very fond of dance and music. Men and women are often dance together arranging them in a circular fashion. During dance they sing, while some others, standing in the centre of the circle provide the music." Among the musical instruments the chief is madol or tumdak which is a double membrane drum. The other instruments are, single membrane drun, file and buffalo horn trumpet. Dance and music have essential role in almost all ceremonial or festive occasions.

R.P. Athpasia says regarding Noctes, "At Laju, tattooing persons were locally known as khanag-means brave men. It was a sign of bravery. It was performed after the harvest of millet especially on the occasion of khotang festival. First tattoo mark is given in the face, second and third at high elbow etc. The tattooing on different parts of the body are known as ngonni (nose), khangni (forehead), manui (check) kevi (chain) and bowi (neck). The performers are known as wi pa. He receives remuneration for his service. Tattooing is practiced to get more and more land. The head hunter (khang) invites all the kahangs (tattooed persons) and elders of the village for khotong ritual. In this ritual, all khangs used to get together at a place called Kholum for celebrating the khotong festival. Hence, individual khangs sit clanwise for dinner. After the feast, all kahangs sing war songs."

Census of India, 1961 describes, "The most popular item of amusement and entertainment among the Siddis is their dhammal dance generally held every week wherein all the members of the community, young and old participate. This dance more or less resembles to the dance of the tribal and African Negroes. The days selected for its performance are Thursday, the first or eleventh day of every Muslim month, besides certain religious and auspicious oceans."

4.3.1.2 Creation of Divinity

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The tribal peoples create a natural divinity through dance. The ontology of Africans is quite different from other civilizations of the world it is based on religious ontology. The god is considered as creator and sustainer of human beings whereas the spirits are made up of superhuman beings thus, explain the destiny of man. While man is considered as the focal point of this ontology, the plant animal kingdom and natural elements construct the space in which man lives by establishing mystical relationship. As a result, this anthropocentric ontology is a complete unit which can’t be broken or destroyed. Unlike the western thought regarding time, the African civilization did not elaborate time as a linear entity. The African perception primarily covered a long past, a present and virtually no future.

The African thought system moves from Sasa to zamani and it does not have space for moving forward. As a result, the discourse is highly dominated by the myths. The power is structured hierarchically in which good is at the top most position as omnipotent whereas the spirits and natural phenomena all below the omnipotent. The human beings are kept at the lowest level with little or no power. It also becomes clear from various aspects of Atuout religion. John W. Burton explains, “Ijoung later told me he had done this so that his own power, Mithiang god would enter his body and speak, giving him strength to perform the exorcism. My grandfathers, you help the land a spirit has fallen in the evening where did the spirit fall it has fallen into these lives you children of about, you help yourselves we are going to argue.”

During field trip I was told that the Siddi community conducts a number of Dhammal dance performances all over the world and these performances retains key aspect of African legacy. The Siddis of Karnataka, like Gujarat, rigidity follows the African divine path. Pashingtan Obeng describes, “The liturgical celebration of St. Rita on Sunday also incorporated Siddi participation. The entry processional song was sung accompanied by dance gestures by African Indians using the following words translated from Konkani:Come, o lord, come to my house come to my house.

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you have given me thus shelter, come to your own house teach me to keep it clean. The house you have given me please do show me."

The dance related instruments such as Malunga, Mugarman, Salani, Mania etc all placed in the higher sacred zone. As these instruments virtually represent the African spirits / Hiriyaru / Pirs etc, they are being used having the sacred line in mind.

4.3.2. Local Symbolism and Gesture

The phoogdi dance is primarily conducted by the Siddi women. It is primarily related to festive occasion such as marriage, child birth, cultivation; harvesting etc. The term phoogdi has been derived from the voice phoo uttered during the dance. The voice phoo is typical way of expressing the happiness by the Siddi community. The rhythm created in the body charge the consciousness beyond the construction of world. It has effectively provided separate space to woman in the Siddi community for the articulation of culture. The context of phoogdi increases in the marriage ceremonies. During the Halad Hadihem (putting turmeric to bride house) the muttaides are allowed to enter the house of bride after signing and phoogdi dance competition. After the arrival of bride and bride groom in the house, the night is celebrated with the various dances and the women performed phoogdi dance. It is also participated by all the young girls and muttaides only.

The relevance of Phoogdi increases manifold as it builds social network among women in the context of male migrating away for work. As the community does not have modern instrument of entertainment, the phoogdi provide easy available mechanism to balance the psycho-structure of body. The field survey reflects the importance of music and dance instruments in the Siddi community due to forest region. This dance also serves as the easiest learning tool for children. The childhood is primarily passed in the home and primary schools. The home and forest is the powerful teacher of young generation. Due to this reason, phoogdi dance is very popular in the Siddi community.

The Sigmu Dance represents typical element of acculturation across the religion. The Siddis are residing in this area and over a period of time, they have converted to the three major religion of the area. There are many festivals in Hinduism

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which bear clear trend of popular culture. The festival of Holi covers the most famous element of popularism. The people organize into groups, keeps color, musical instruments and move from place to place to meet the near and dear. Similarly, the Muslim fakirs move with musical instruments from place to place to collect money and singing religious songs to the people. Further, The Catholic Siddis have also evolved a typical tradition of popular culture for penance. The Catholic Siddis move in bands to sing, dance and collect money. The primary aim of the dance penance or to get rid of all evils attached every year, thus, the Sigmu dance is also an annual affair. Further, this dance is the simplest method of image making process.

4.3.2.1 Appropriation of Holi dance

The African diaspora has readily appropriated the various popular elements of Holi dance. Holi dance represent one of the most popular and widely celebrated festivals of not only Hindus but Indians also. Holi is a festival or color. Though, Holi has definite roots and context in the Hindu theology but over a period of time, it has evolved into popular festival. As a popular festival, Holi is celebrated across various socio-religious lines of Indian subcontinent.

In the context African culture, the holi festival bears certain elements which not only share similar values but also the festival provides a cultural tool to get emulated in the mainstream cultural discourse without being noticed. The festival of color ultimately requires the participants to virtually close real images and adopt temporarily virtual unrecompensed structures made up of color. In this context, the festival bear close resemblance with forest based or African based dancing practices. The inbuilt structure of forest imagination in the African community has always required various practices of dance by which the dances can adopt different images plant and animal kingdom. It not only places the Siddi thought into the African ontology but shares the cultural capital of forest tribes.

The Siddis of Karnataka have already followed different methods to retain the above mentioned features. Simultaneously, the Siddis are accommodating the universal approach of holi. Holi being a festival, beyond all isms, provide a chance to share various social formulations at a broader level. During the field survey, the Siddis pointed out the need to get a platform by which they may are successfully
and democratically put forward the politico-economic issues to the society. The Christian and Hindu Siddis openly perform dhammal and other theatrical practices to create a popular platform, so that, the masses can be made aware about various problems faced by the Siddi community.

The period of globalisation has pushed forward the Siddi community for not only to create their over pan-Indian universal platform, but also they are placed in the daily basis interactive zone of mainstream society. As a result, the holi festival provides crystal clear chance to the Siddi community to interact with the local people on cultural lives. It has created a space for joint celebration. Rather than meeting on the point of departure, the festival provides continuous chance to meet on the point of convergence. The Siddis, irrespective of religion, settled in urban areas have participated in the joint cultural zone for the more that 5 years Krishna Siddi says that 'earlier the Siddi were considered as lazy, untalented but now with the availability of shared cultural zone, the Siddi and local people are meeting in a cohesive manner. It will enhance speedily the process of removing various stereotype images created due to various misconceptions'.

4.3.2.2 Appropriation of Moharam

The appropriation of Moharram by Siddi Muslim is historically rooted in 13th century. The African Sufism is very well attested in the period of khalji rulers A.L. Srivastava says about Siddi maula, "He had a large number of followers whom he used to entertain in a most lavish manner. There was a plot to marry a daughter of the late sultan Jalal-ud-din din Mahmud to Siddi maula and then to raise him to the throne. Some of the nobles of Firz court became privy to the conspiracy. The sultan had murdered Siddi maula and his chief disciple arrested and brought before him. He lost him temper in a controversy with the maula and had him murdered on his presence. The death of the saint was followed by a dust storm and severe famine caused by the failure of seasonal rains. It was superstitiously believed by the people that these were due to the curse of the deceased saint on the sultan." 46

The appreciation of African element has again been emphasized by the

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presence of African sufi in muharram since nineteenth century. Jafar shariff says, “on the occasion of Muharram, many persons adopt the garb and mode of faqirs such as suheliwalas (consist of two classes – Azad and Benawa), Majnun, Laila, Bharang or Bharbhaiaga, Malang, Angithishah & Siddi. The Siddi or Sayyidi master is an African Negro ten or twelve of whom blacken their bodies with lampblack and oil. On their head, they wear a rough hat made of the skin of sheep or a goat, with wool or hair. They carry a bamboo bow and in the right, a coconut fastened to short stick, the former continuing some revels which rattles. This phenotypical representation with African cultural aspect reflects the position attached by the Siddis in the religious sphere and they were totally Indihanized.”

The Siddis of Gujarat have carved a separate and mixed place in the form of sufi shrines represent independent and mixed heritage maintained by the Siddis. The dual aspects of Siddi Sufi shrines help the community to distinguish identity while maintaining continuity with the mainstream Islam. In this context, Moharam plays one the most significant role for providing a shared zone with autonomy to Siddi community. The Siddi Muslims of Karnataka are largely part of Islam with reference to celebration festivals. They have not been able to carve out anything new and separate identity from Islam except Ancestor worship. The Islamic festivals are more and more Siddi oriented in Uttara Kannada, Belgams Dharwad.

4.3.3 Dhammal Dance act as Spirit Communication

The chief component of Dhammal dance is spirit communication. Amy Catlin – Jairazbhoy says, “The Siddi dhammal ecstatic dance is also traditionally presented during the annual urs as well as those Siddis who wish to enjoy their music and dance, whether by invitation to their homes for celebrations, to public spaces for festival, or within the precincts of a Siddi or other sherine. There are instances of danced worship among other sufi faquirs and followers, such as the daily group trance-dancing at the shrine of lal Shahbaz Qalandar of sinah in shewan.


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4.3.3.1 Spirit Association in African Legacy

The spiritual world of African peoples is very densely populated with spiritual beings, spirits and the living dead. Their insight of spiritual realities, whether absolute or apparent, is extremely sharp. There are many societies which have only one or two divinities of any major status. The Bambuti recognize Tore as the divinity in charge of death, to whom they refer as the gate of the abyss and the spirit of the dead. It is clear that the weather and natural phenomena are generally associated with divinities or personified as such, major aspects of nature, who the sun, mountains, seas, lakes, rivers and boulders are also attributed to have or to be spiritual beings or divinities.

A.K. Abasi says, "Kasena consider that, through death, what is their worldly spills over into what is other - worldly and living mix with the dead. This world, tiga banga lieterally here on earth and the world of the dead (kyuuru), become a living theatre for the funeral drama, and members of these two worlds are fully involved. In particular, the burial experts and diviners, as well as the cross paths, sounds, and rhythms, fire and smoke all mediating instances between these tow worlds. The bayaa, funeral or burial expert performs the very art of funeral: he is celebrating the journey from this life to the world after death for the benefit of both the deceased and community of living. The role of burial expert is due to his lengthy and difficult initiation into bayarran the institution of burial experts. It is esteemed as the one of diviner, or of political titleholders, it is more than that of a simple grave-digger."\(^{49}\)

Since the spirits have sunk into the horizon of the zamani, they are within the state of collective immortality, relative to man's position. They have no family or personal ties within human beings, and all no longer the living dead. For a man, the spirits are strangers, foreigners, outsiders and in the category of things. Becoming spirits is in a sense, of social elevation. For this reason, African peoples show respect and high regard for their living dead and for some of the important spirits.

\(^{49}\) A.K. Abasi, n. 8 p. 448.
People report that they see the spirits in ponds, caves, groves, mountains or outside their villages singing, dancing, herding cattle, working in their fields or nursing their children. In many societies it is said and believed that spirits call people by name, but on turning round to see who called them there would be nobody.

For spirits which are not associated with a particular family, offerings may be placed in spirits shrines where these exist. Such shires belong to the community, and may be ceased by priests. The importance of collective shrines may also be understood in the context of M'Bona cult which played crucial for political formation in the areas of southern Malawi and Mozambique. Mathew Schoffeleers says, "The Mang'anja make a fundamental distinction between what are termed spirits of the land and spirits of the household, the former being inked for the well being of country and the population as a whole; the latter by individuals and lineage sections. Thus, for instance, territorial spirits are invoked at times of drought, epidemic diseases, wars and similar calamities."50

Igor Kopytoff observes, "The Guji Oromo of Southern Ethiopia have undergone a paradigm shift during this century from a cosmology appropriate to an independent society of warlike cattle herders who own to one that acknowledges the greater power of forces outside their geographical borders. The cosmology is articulated through two closely related terms, Woyyu and Kayyo which follow a nature /culture dichotomy is power, dimly perceived, that is, outside the orderly realm of society. This unrestrained power is associated with lightning, two species of poisonous snakes, and the conflicting relations among affines. Woyyu is unrestrained potency. It is epitomized by the great Kallu, the high priest of all Guji whose most distant ancestor descended from the sky. Ancestor descended from the sky. Congruent with the power he represents, the high priest lives in his own small territory and may not enter the Guji."51

4.3.3.2 Dressing pattern of African Tribes

The dressing pattern of African tribes during the performance is literally very distinctive and remarkable. The different African tribes have evolved multiple methods of dressing during the performance ritual related dances according to local geo-socio symmetry. Definitely, it reflects the appropriation of local elements which primarily belongs to forest. Not only in Africa, but also in India the tribal people have carved out different dressing patterns over a period of time. In India, a naga man wears little apron which consists of a strip of white or blue cloth some four feet long and ten inches wide with a pattern at one end. This strip is folded from the opposite end and sewn, leaving the ornamented end flat to form a flap. It is tied round the waist so that the ornamented position terms of flap in the front. A Naga women’s skirt of a piece of cloth of yard or a yard and a half long and twenty to thirty inches wide. It is wrapped round the waist with the top outer corner tucked in just joint of the left strip.

In the case of Oraon, the adult male wears a piece of cotton cloth about a foot in breadth and nine to fifteen feet in length. It is wound round the waist and is then passed between the thighs once highly and then loosely, the ends being allowed to hang down the waist. The Oraon women wear round the waist a piece of cloth about 2 feet wide and six feet long, which reaches down to the knees. The upper part of the body is left uncovered.

The folk dance which is totally free from ritualistic and religious barriers in Karnataka is Simha nrutya (Lion Dance), the popular dance of the Honnavara taluk in the Uttara kannada district, usually performed by yakshagana articles. The dance is in effect a charming imitation of a lion’s movements. Hence the dancer wears a costume which closely resembles the Lion’s costume. The costume is specially made of bask and yarn using natural dyes. The dancer wears a mask which is made up of cotton in such a way to look like a lion’s face two silver pangs are inserted in the mouth to create a visual impression of fangs. With the perfect portrayal of a lion’s behavior, movements, mode of hunting and preying portrayal of a lions, the dance is performed.

One of the most interesting aspects of Kathakali is its elaborate make up
code. Most often the make up can be classified into five basic sets namely pacha, kathi, kari, thiadi and minukku. Pacha has green as the dominant color and is used to portray noble male characters who is said to have a mixture of satvik and rajasic nature, rajasic characters having on evil streak, such as the demon king, Ravana's portrayal with red as the predominant color in a green background.

A central trait of African dance is that of Poly centric. This means that— unlike many other regions of the world—the body is not treated as a stiff unit but is segments into several centers of movement (shoulders, chest, pelvis, arms, legs, etc) that may be moved according to different rhythmical components of the music of even or even add rhythmical competent of their own.

Agbekor also testifies to the popularity of warrior dance. Agbekor comes from the Foh and Ewe people. It is an ancient dance once known as Atamga. Agbekor is often performed at cultural events and funerals. Yabara is the West African dance of welcome marked by the ‘The Beaded net covered Rattle’; It is thrown into the air to different heights by the female dancers to mark tempo and rhythm changes. This is an impressive spectacle as all dances will throw and catch them at the same time.

Moribayasa is dance used by women who have bad luck. It is also the name of a particular tree that grows near the village in Guinea where this dance originated. The women prepare by putting on ragged and destroy clothes, then goes with a group of drummers to the tree. The groups plays, and she sings and dance all around the village before returning to the tree. There she digs whole and removes her ragged clothing; she buries these at the foot of the tree with a prayer for help.

4.3.4. Traces of African Legacies:

The dances of Siddis reflect many traces of African Legaceis. The central trait of Siddis dance is polycentricity which is a universal feature of African dance across the world. The concept of polycentric dance considers various parts of the body as separate unit of movements. The dance primarily expressed the inner feelings of body. In this context the dancing is a spontaneous and voluntary activity and the drummed beat plays a secondary role of binding dancer together.
The Dhmmam dance has been perceived from two angles in Gujarat and Karnataka. The Gujarat Siddis considered Dhammam as dance of possession and summoning. Amy Catlin says, "The Dhammam dance is an essential element of sufi cult to Gori pir that prevails among Siddis in western India and Pakistan, with shrines in Sindh, Kutch, Saurashtra, North and South Gujarat, Bombay and Uttar Kannada district of Karnataka. Sufism as forever eight century prevailed in western India, Pakistan where numerous recognized forms or well established, such as the chistiya order with an emphasis on music. The cult the Gori pir, however, seems to be distinct, without formal affiliation to the four major Sufi order, although, there is a traditional relationship to the Malang, Chistiya and Rifa-e-Sufi."

The term Dhammam, Dhammal or Goma is newly reformed form of Ngoma. It is Bantu word. In East Africa, the term Ngoma encompasses a number of cults of affliction and it is widely recognized to connote performance, drumming, dancing, celebration and ritual therapy. The spiritual /ritual/supernatural aspects of dance have maintained relevance in other tribes of Karnataka such as bhoota nrutya, Naga nrutya, Harige. The forest based geographic patterns have divinized the various phenomena of daily life. It acts as the most powerful and simple channel to conduct dialogue with supernatural powers. Regarding the instruments of Dhamal dance used by Siddis of Gujarat R.K. Trivedi says, "The jhunjhuna is made of a coconut shell in which pebbles rattle. It is generally covered with a green silken cloth. It is also called Mai Misra after their goddess whom they revere very much. According to religious behest it is generally played by females only. The bigger drums are usually played by females only. The bigger drums are played by males. These instruments are held in great veneration, as they are associated with their Pirs and goddesses. They do not touch them while they themselves are not clean or pure. Pirs and saints are invoked whenever these instruments are taken out from the dargah wherein they are usually stored."

Edward Alpers refers to Salem merchant Joseph Osgood at Muscut in 1852- "In the first set were twelve men in a circle, to whose legs were attached many wooden sticks filled with pebbles. They wore native costume. Two other were monkey skin waist bands,

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51 India, Census of India 1961, n. 43 p. 37.
and head dresses three feet in diameter, made of colored feathers. The singular costume of this doublet was completed, a tergo, by a horse's tail fastened at a small angle with the waist. They balanced within a circle, moving their limbs in lazy gesture for a moment or two, when they dropped upon their hands and knees, and pearcing hither and thither like infirm quadrupeds, shook their heads spitefully and ended by butting them forcibly together barking like dogs, or bleating like goats during the performance. Meanwhile, there were women dancing around them singing widely and fanning with diligence becoming Spanish ladies in fandango.54

In Karnataka, the Dhammal dance has been integrated by Siddis in the respective religions adopted by them. They organize the dance during the religious or secular occasions of life. The dance is dominated by Mugaram, the biggest drum standing above 3.5 feet high and mushiro which is slung from the shoulder. Selani is a fiddle like instrument with a dried gourd having a stiff catagut string and a bunch of peacock feathers mounted on one end and shells as charms to ward of evil. It can be played with a coconut shell in which loose pebble rattle.

The Dhammam has similarity with the Mari Kunitha, a Shakti dance pratice in Mysore and Mandya district of Karnataka, the dancer organize in rose or forming a big circle and dance to the tune of chakravaddya. The pace and speed of dance moves of according to the beet and creates frenzied pitch. Simialry the stick dance of Karnataka involves the bending, swaying and jumping activities according to the tune of rhythmic clashing of stick. The pattern of dressing in Dhammam also have similarity with the Simha nrutya (lion dances) performed by Yakshagana artists. It is performed on the imitation of lion’s movements. The African-American dancers have maintained the linear relations of dance and music. The rhythms and body movements constitute major part of dance.

This dance is a power game. It can be performed by males, females, young children. The first part of the dance is invocation of God/variious spirits. The Hindu, Muslim and Christian invoke respective gods before starting dance. On the religious day, the spirits comes to some selected members of the community to solve various problems. The dance

is used as an occasion to call the spirits. After starting the dance, the participants start moving in a circle and start singing. The dance gets formal beginning with the entry of one or two person, jump in the circle and perform various kinds of activities with drum beating. The gestures symbolize various aspects of tribal denominations such as hunter and hunted. The beating of drum raises the rhythm and movements of dancers. Gradually, the drum beating overtakes the vocal music. The instrumental music and body movements create a powerful storm which appears to be almost hysterical.

The Siddis have developed various beliefs which help in regenerating the community against various odds. The inclusion of Siddi community in the three major religions of India has not restricted the community to maintain ancestral spirits based belief system. The most important epicenter of belief system is that the world is run by spirits linked with religion formation and kinship. The concept of Hiriyaru worship has kept alive the common traditions of spirits worship in the Siddis as a core part of religion unlike India where it is outside the main religion belief system. The politico-economic formation is understood as determined by these spirits and spirit’s relation with spirits relation with dominant spirits.

The spirit cosmology forms an integral part of Hinduism and the spirit worship is found in all parts of country. The local people in the absence of modern facilities rely on the solution provided by this spirits on the auspicious occasions. Yet, the distinctive aspect of African diaspora in Karnataka is that the Siddis have maintained this tradition in monotheistic religion as a core element of family structure leading to construction to tribal based political entity. The Muslims have allowed the Siddis to worship the spirits outside the mosque. In Yellapur, the Siddis have attached a lot of religious significance to the tree outside the mosque; the maulvi has allowed them to worship the spirit, though in Islam the worship, other than Allah, is highly prohibited.

The Siddi Christians also follow the same pattern of spirit worship in pre-1990 period. The Catholic and Protestant church has allowed them to worship the spirits. Yet, the church has continuously tried to dissuade the Siddis to worship the spirits. In the post-1990 period, the church has succeeded in persuading the Siddi community to perform ancestor worship in church. The father of church worship, on behalf of Siddis, Hiriyaru worship and the Siddis pay dakshina voluntarily.
4.3.4.1 Rhythmic Movements

The term Ngoma refers to the elongated wooden drum with a single membrane attached at one end with pegs. This major drum type was distributed along an east west line roughly at the southern savanna forest border. The north of this line was a region of mixed drum types with the pegged ngoma type interspersed with a type that uses cords to fasten the membrane to the body of the drum. Drums whose membranes well attached with cold or string were rarely called ngoma.

In the region of Ngoma rituals, Ngoma the instrument usually also identified as a dance drum and a serve medicine drum. It may also be a drum of state in societies where trance possession and therapeutic cuts are present. A ngoma, more than any other drum, is used in this therapeutic setting to the accompaniment of shakers and singing.

Therapeutic rituals in the rain forest of Equator province of northern zone generally demonstrate the typical call and response pattern of musical interaction found elsewhere as sufferer and healer, and a choir made up of sets of additional individuals on either or both sides, with accompaniment of hand clapping, rasps, rattles, whistles, bells, stringed zithers or harps, horns, gongs and kettle of slid gang drums, as well as occasionally the xylophone. The southern savanna, east African, south east and southern African examples of therapeutic rituals demonstrate the near pervasive presence of the ngoma type lanced skin drum in the performance of the ngoma rite.

In the shona region the drum is replaced by another instrument, the large gourd - resonating hand piano, mbira, usually played in an orchestra of a dozen or so members, in performances called bira. The Kongo region reveals a mixed picture, in so far as musical instrumentation of healing rite is cornered, consonant with Boone’s determination that western Zaire was a region of mixed drum types. Kongo therapeutic rites utilize a mixture of norms, single and double gongs, whistles, rattles and a range of drums. The Swahili coast features the ‘pure’ ngoma types of healing rites, invariably from the interior, although the Islamic - influenced rites utilize small double membrane drums and shakers. The patterning of the instruments in the therapeutic rites, against this backdrop of the call and response and song-
dance, suggests that there are regional or culturally, specific constellations of instruments.

These instruments may also be termed in terms of the common - sense designations of the instruments types – harps, zither, whittle, horn, drum or in terms of the formal designations of musicologists. Idiophone – an instrument that yields a sound by its own substances being staff and elastic enough to vibrate without requiring a stretched membrane or string (eg. Xylophone, mbira, sansa, ukembe, rattles, bells, gongs, sit drums).

The instrument known as membrophone makes sound produced by vibration of a stretched membrane brought about by striking friction or sound waves (eg. drums). Further, the aerophone is a music instrument in which tone is generated by means of air set in vibration (eg. horns, flutes, panpipes, and occasions) whereas the chordophone functions on the basis of strings as tone producing elements, the pitch of the instrument being dependent on the strings’ (e.g. harp, zither).

The chordophones, the stringed instruments, although they are present throughout, are used in healing rites only in the northern forest region of Africa. Most common healing rites the central and southern African region, is the idiophone, that is, the shaker, gong, xylophone, skit, going drum, and the thumbs or hand piano. Second most common in healing rites of the entire region is the membrophone, the single or double membrane drum. The aerophone seems to be more common in the northern forest region than in the southern savanna and other southern regions.

The Africans use dance in all sorts of occasions to express their inner feelings, whether of for or of sorrow. While the dancing is spontaneous and voluntary, the drumbeat provides the rhythm that holds the dancers together. The drum is the sign of life; its beat is the heartbeat of the community such is the power of the drum which powerfully evokes emotions, to touch the souls of those who hear its rhythms.

4.3.4.2 Body Movements

The performance of polycentricity with ever increasing rhythm is the central event in ngoma. It is the dominant troupe, 'the symbol that stands for itself and
defines the institution'. Doing ngoma opens with a declarative statement prayer or utterences as the call and song is developed, the surrounding peoples respond with clapping and soon singing begins en masse, and then the instruments enter in. This basic set of features, with many variations, may be found throughout the larger central and southern African setting. The ndembeu call it kwimba ngoma, to sing an ngoa. The Venda of the northern Transvaal also use the same verb to speak of ngimbo dza dzingoma / singing an ngoma, drum. The kango of western Bantu drum up a major medicine with a song, nkunga.

In the Nguni speaking setting in southern Africa, the angoma, divine - healer, is one who does ngoma. All of these references identify ngoma with patterned rhythm of words, the use of performance dance, and the invocations or the songs that articulate the affiliation and therapeutic rite. Many song dance performances punctuate the sufferer novice’s course through offerings of the rites.

The song dance of ngoma may last all night, as in the kango example at the head of the chapter. Such a session is made up of many shorter units of song; the self presented and the response. In the Cape Town setting, it may be repeated by the same person usually with a different song or someone else takes up ngoma and does his or her ngoma. The sequence of each units may go on for hours. It may occur within the context of events heralded as purification celebration for established healers or as celiberative points in the initiatory course of novices. The familiar group of ngoma song presentations may be seen at a wide variety of events within the local ngoma network. An important variant of the suffer-singer may be seen at a wide variety of events within the local ngoma network.

The distinction between the therapeutic song and the coming out song suggests that within the complex symbol ‘ngoma’ there are at least two levels of narrative or performative understanding. The first is the importance of song- dance in defining and coming to terms with suffering; the second is the importance of moving the sufferer toward formulation of his or her own personal articulation of that condition. The format is the quintessential act in ngoma, for it bonds the singer to the one being sung to, and shows the second how, when he recovers, he may begin to reformulate his own self with a creative new song. Ngoma may take
another from in which the individual begins to present self in a more active and articulate manner. This leads to the special personal song.

The dance (Kpanlogo) ensemble consists of drummers, dancers and singers. Usually there is a master drummer leading two or three supporting drummers, a lead dancer leading the dance group and a lead cantor. The master drummer plays the solo drum part which goes along with the dance movements. The other percussionists play the supporting rhythms on drums and the rattle and the bell. The lead dancer leads the dance group and is responsible for the training of the dancer. The lead cantor sings the solo position songs. Usually the singers and dancers are the same people.

The drum can be played with hands and sticks; it depends on the rhythm, which particular technique will be used. For the Kpanlogo dance, only the hand technique containing there different strokes is used. First is the open stroke, played with the fingers at the rim of the drum. This stroke gives the sound of a high open tone tone. Second is the bounce in which the full hand is dropped at the middle of the skin. This makes a base sound. Third is the slap which can be made open or muted. The slap is also played in the middle of the skin, but then only which the tips of the fingers. The muted slap is played softly and is used as full of the basic rhythm. The first supporting drum constantly plays on the off beat. The others two support drums play a pattern on the on beat. The supporting drums are usually played on the male drums; the master drummer plays the drum with the highest pitch.

The master drummer is free in playing as long as he wants as long as he stays within the rules of the community. Drummers themselves are usually not aware of the rules because they are taught from childhood. As solo can be free improvisation by the master drummers. It can also be a musical interpretation of the dance movements. The latter happens when the master drummer follows the movements of the dancer. The master drummer sticks humbs of rhythm that strengthens the physical movement of the dancers. It can also happen vice versa, when the dancers adjust their movements to the rhythm that is placed by the rhythm that is placed by the master drummer. In addition to show his virtuosity on his instrument, the master
drummer might add other techniques than the basics to his drumming; glissando (an open tone is changed in pitch with the finger of the other hand), muting a tone with the elbow and flames (two notes following each other very fast).

4.4. Challenges to Cultural Identity

The identification of oppressive forces with reference to Siddis needs a wider framework to situate the geographic and social construction which determines their nature and modus operandi. The settlements of Siddis are primarily situated in the forest areas such as Gir Forest and Western Ghats. I realised the limitations of mobility in these areas during visit to various settlements of Siddis as the public transport is almost invisible in and around the Siddi settlements. On the one hand, the nomadic-pastoral nature of social organization makes folk culture a tool to assert against these tendencies; on the other, the Karnataka forest department and Havig Brahmin, Lingayat act as oppressive forces.

The folk culture provides a framework to locate Siddis in the modern world. Nobody can live with a deconstructed image in a society. The folk culture serves as a source of making respected identity. The respect is searched in the past. The oppressive forces of marginalized section in general, and Siddis in particular operate through structural and institutional patterns by limiting psycho-socio space.

The psycho-socio space acts as threshold energy for a community. It is hemoglobin without which a community dies. A multicultural formation serves the best mechanism to foster elements of growth. It helps in the biological and behavioral development of a community. In the case of exclusive dominant psycho-socio space, as in Karnataka, the marginalized sections have two options: first, to remain subordinate in the feudalistic-slave pattern, second, to articulate an alternative pattern of their signs and symbols in the 'mainstream psycho-socio space'.

In the case of Siddis and Gowlis, they have tried passive effort to carve out a space in the 'mainstream psycho-socio space' in pre-1990 period. The Siddis and other marginalized sections witnessed direct oppression from social structure in this period. The state remained passively active to their problems. The post-1990 periods has put another heavyweight on the side of exploitative section in the Karnataka Forest Development. The Karnataka forest is primarily dominated by the local social forces, and
these forces are eagerly accepting the policies regulated by the government under the policies outlined by developed countries dominated by World Bank etc. These developments have forced the Siddis to reorient their cultural tool from constructing tribal identity to diasporic identity.

4.4.1. Structural Pattern of Exploitation of Siddis

4.4.1.1. Construction as Lower Caste

The formation of social space in north Karnataka is determined by caste, class and religious components. The settlements of Siddis in Sirsi-Yellapur areas reflect the limited social space as it is covered by Lingayats and Havig Brahmins. The Lingayats have control over paddy and areca nut cultivation. The land is very fertile and the lingayats have installed irrigation units. The coastal areas are primarily dominated by Halakki, Vokkals, Naiks Gamokkal whereas the poorest groups are Halaki, Ambigs, and Gowlis. Coastal ghats are dominated by Gouderu (Konkani), Havyak Brahmins whereas the Gowlis have reduced space. The dominant caste/religious communities such as Brahmin, Lingayat, Shaikh, Christian etc., have organized in endogamous social groupings. This endogamous structure does not allow the Siddi symbol and signs to get space in the structure. The structure of Indian society in general and Karnataka in particular has been operating on the caste and class pattern. This pattern shows shift from class to caste as one move form urban areas to rural areas of India.

It becomes easy to understand from the biography of Omparkash Valmiki; he depicts about childhood experience of caste atrocities committed by Tyagi children against Valmiki children, “It was July or August 1962. I had got admitted in class eight. I had passed class seven with good marks. I was one of the four good students of the class. One day I left a bit early for the school. Since we did not have a watch or a clock at home, we left for school when we thought it was time. That day I was perhaps the only one going on the paved road that early in the morning. Behind me was Surajbhan Taga’s son Brajesh. He was much older than me. He had long sticks on the shoulder. He was probably going towards his fields. He started to mutter the moment he saw me. I kept walking as I had not heard him. When we got near the Kothi, the Canal inspection house, he called, ‘abey Chure ke, stop’. The school was not far from there. I turned to look at him. There was mischief written large on his face. He came near me and said, ‘Chure ke,
you really have sprouted horns. You have become arrogant. Even your stride has changed. When I kept going without replying to him, he came ahead of me, cutting me off my escape route. In an angry hectoring voice he said, I hear you are clever in your studies, 'He planted one end of stick in my stomach. 'Let me also see how bright you are. He was bent on starting a row. I wanted to avoid it. Seeing me quiet, he growled again: 'You will remain a Chuhra however much you study. He pushed me with the stick.'

There are many types of atrocities committed against the Dalits. The Siddis have come in contact of this social formation in post-independence period. Further, the post 1990 period has accelerated the interaction level of Siddis with both marginalized section and dominant section of Uttara Kannada, Belgaum and Dharwad.

The society of Siddis represents a case of structural isolation and marginalization. The settlements are in the dense forest areas and in pre-1990 period, the ‘mainstream’ forces needed only cheaper labor free of cost, thus, the nature of interaction was primarily on feudalistic pattern. These groups were gradually articulated in the ‘mainstream’ space which created negatively loaded attributes. The increasing pressures in the areas forced the ‘mainstream’ forces to enter in the domain of the tribals. This stripping of forests put the tribal in the, hitherto, other world. Along with it, the forest department in collaboration with institutions across world, started to preserve the forest. These twin developments put new rules and regulations, totally unknown to the tribal. It created crisis in the marginalized section as a result the religious mobility emerged as a tool to escape discrimination.

There are various organizations for their limited upliftment such as R.S.S, Catholic Jesus mission and madrassa. The majority of Siddis have converted to Christianity and Islam. The organized religious structure of Christianity and Islam is providing various kinds of help and social networking. The caste based social structure gives birth based reservation to the Havig Brahmin, Lingayats, and Reddys and so called ‘upper caste. This framework of ‘upper caste and lower caste’ determines the social-economic and political mobility in this region

4.4.1.2. Black as Color of Evils

55 Omparaakash Valmiki, Joothan : A Dalit’s Life (Kolkata:Samya, 2003), p.29
The Siddi have been given stereotype connotations such as thief, liar, liquor drinker etc. First, the black color of the Siddis has been symbol of negative attributes. Though, the south Indian is also primarily wheatish or wheatish black color but, the local area has its own framework where black and white are clearly differentiated. The color of Skin plays a crucial role in local psychoanalysis for justifying the domination and subordination. The dominant forces in Karnataka are primarily white in local framework. They have good physique and material resources. There are more than twenty four dominant section of Brahmin, twenty sections of Lingayats and other dominant castes who dominant the psycho-socio space. The local mainstream framework of extroception is defined by these forces. The value-ladded norms of society de-legetimaise the dignity of marginalized Siddis.

The brahmanical castes use the classical cultural tools to legitimatize the exploitation of Gowlis, Harijans, Siddis etc., whereas the folk culture of these marginalized sections in general and Siddis in particular, acts as a tool of de-legitimatizing the exploitative mainstream discourse of Brahmancal castes and classes.

4.4.2. Institutionalised Pattern of Appropriation of Siddis

4.4.2.1 Siddi as a Scheduled Tribe

The Indian state has finally provided the best mechanism of development to the Siddi community. Now, the state has protected the Siddi community under the horizon of positive affirmation. It opens two multiple lines of assimilation on the institutions of state. The establishment of LAMPs, reservation in JFPM and village panchayats have created institutionalized corridor for day to day cultural linkages. The Siddis have been taken out from the isolated pockets of forces. They are now officially recognized as a forest dwellers. One the one side, the Siddi community legitimately demand all share on the politico – economic structure, on the other hand, the arena of interaction has provided open ended lines for crystallization of various cultural elements.

The state will ensure institutionalised availability of all the basic structures required for the development of the tribal community. In this context, the Siddi community faces the higest threat since medieval period regarding loosening of disaporic identity. Although the urban Siddis operating at the institutional level
have already shows many signs of abovementioned developments, but the gestation and churning of new diasporic tools seems to round the uncontrolled mixing without any conditioning.

The Karnataka government has started Joint forest Planning and Management programmes which is aimed to save the western Ghat, set up industries and ensure local participation. The forest department is limiting the psycho-socio space of Siddis, for example the term forest has become contested political space. The forest department perceives the forest as an area of land, plants, animals and environment, whereas the Siddis, Gowlis and other nomadic tribes perceive forest as an area which serve all the requirements of a tribe essential for socio-cultural-political-economic-psychological development. It is a space which saves them from the unknown world of Havyak, Lingayats etc. The Siddis get from the forest various help such as fodder for animals; medicines for friend’s community, space for amusement, space for the games of children etc. The forcible removal from forest means loss of dignity, independence, security, employment etc.

The forest department has divided the forest into five zones and the tribals are allowed through the newly formed Village Forest Committees to utilize the forest products. This entire process has negatively affected the Siddis on two grounds: first, the tribal have been prohibited in the four resourceful zones of forest, second, the Village Forest Committees are primarily dominated by Forest department and dominant section of Western Ghat. The restriction on the mobility of tribal has made them ‘encroachers’, thus, culprit in the ‘mainstream discourse’. As a result, the Karnataka Forest Department has been transformed into a Policeman. The main point of confrontation between Tribals (Siddis) and KFD, dominant section arise from the fact that the remaining four zones have been permitted to private companies. Further, the department is violating its policy by following monoculture crop pattern rather than biodiversity pattern. The monoculture pattern deprives the tribals from various resources which sustain the household of a tribal.

4.4.2.2 Plantation of Hegemonic practices in Church

Along with the institutionalized accommodation of the Siddi community the religious structure have also reshaped the appropriating machinery. The democratic
approach of local religious setup has created new challenges to the consolidation of diasporic identity. The religious institutions have adopted new policies of accepting the tribal people with their indigenous norms and values. It creates smooth way for the participation and playing active role in the newly founded social networking

4.4.3. Challenges to Folk Culture:

The folk culture of Siddis places major challenge in era of globalization. Unlike the Gujarati Siddis, the Siddis of Karnataka have not been able to institutionalize the cultural capital of folk culture. The production and re-production of folk culture in the pre-1990s period was possible to due to exclusive and isolated space available in the forest regions. The classification of forest under JFPM has made compulsory for the Siddis to participate jointly with other sections of local society under VFC. The absence of modern language poses the biggest challenge to the production of folk culture. Yet, the Siddis are re-sharpening the tools of oral history for the production and re-production of folk culture. The folk culture in the abovementioned circumstances has emerged as mitochondria for construction of history.

4.4.3.1. Local Religion as Assimilatory Challenges

The folk dance and music have been constructing mythological, historical and social narratives. The pre-1990 folk culture of Siddi community primarily focused on social narratives. It aimed to project the community as a tribe. Imam Khan says, “The emergence of Siddi settlement in the early 1950’s was perceived as a tribal settlement. The houses were settled in the forest regions, therefore, the community folk music and dance was centered on celebration as a part of forest. The contestation over resources was very limited. Gradually, the take over of forest region by Karnataka Forest Department along with private companies on the one hand, and the penetration of dominant society on the other hand led to transformation of social narratives into historical narratives.”

The mythological and social narratives were gradually segregated into the three religions Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity. The religious structure of these religions led to emergence of isolated mythological and social narratives. Imam says, “It was initially perceived as a positive development in the Siddi community. The vertical alignment was also considered as a positive development. The Siddi community started using new religious signs and symbols such as photos of Hindu and Christian Gods whereas the
Muslim Siddi used numerical symbols. The mythological and social narratives were located in the religio-social structure. But, the Siddi also realized the usefulness of unity on horizontal lines."

The 1980's witnessed intense pressure on Siddi community from Karnataka Forest Department and society. The religious structure failed to acculturate signs and symbols of Siddi community. It led to crafting of negative image in the mainstream discourse. The Siddis are still perceived as a careless community. The poor socio-economic condition of the community has been projected as a by product of Siddi nature. Further, the Siddi community was categorized as a thief community. The different interpretations of forest by Siddi community and KFD have led to creation of new parameters for image formation. The Siddi community started intensive movement for tribal status. The main aim of Siddis was to get a tribal status as was done by Gowlis. The Siddis shared the theatre, dance and music with other marginalized sections to demonstrate their deprivation to society and the state. It was a period of horizontal alliances. The folk culture started tracing similarities with the other tribal communities. It also becomes evident from the settlement of Siddis and Gowlis in Yellapur, Ankola, Siddapur areas. These tribes started sharing common platform in social and cultural fields. They stared joint movement against the dominant sections and forest department’s atrocities. Though, these groups remained endogamous, but it did not affect emerging unity for demanding tribal status. Thus, the spirits worship, phoogdi, sigmu, Dhammam dances became the sharing platform.

4.4.3.2. Lack of Cultural Reproductive Infrastructure

In the post-1990 period, the stage for the articulation of identity has been changed from tribal to diasporic entity. Though, the state has awarded the tribal status to the Siddis but the utility of the status has already been reduced due to biased categorization of forest zones and availability of limited participation through joint forest planning and management programmes. The tribal identity has very limited to give to the Siddis. Though, the Siddis have participated in village Panchayats and have gained seats due to tribal basis but it has come at a time when the new structural adjustment programme has left limited space. Another important development is the increasing interest of academic class to study the Siddis.
The British and Indian government is funding research to analyse the problems of Siddis. The scholars, such as Joseph H Harris, Edward A Alpers etc., have argued to research the Siddis as a diasporic community rather any another local community. These two developments have directed the Siddis to rebrush the folk cultural tools to construct the story of cross-cultural movement which stared in Ancient period in Indian Ocean and later in Atlantic Ocean. As a result, the religious incorporation of Siddis has also been seen as a reverse movement. The retreating movement of Siddis from religion based signs and symbols to Siddi entity have opened new lines of consolidation in the era of globalization. It has provided new channels of communication to the Siddi community.

The folk dance in Karnataka has been used as a channel of communication. Goravas tribe use Gorava mela as an instrument of narrating stories in Karnataka. Similarly, the Kuruba tribe use Dollu dance as a powerful tool of narrating stories in public function. Dollu dance is very similar to Dhammal dance with reference to sound and speed. Francis Lawrence says, “The importance of folk dance and music is very different in tribes and mainstream society. In the tribal communities, the folk dance and musical instruments are used as a source of identity and differentiation. Further, the pattern of dance and music, using same instruments, is also used as a parameter for tribal identity. But, the similarity in these tribal cultural tools can be as communicating instruments. The Siddis of Karnataka have started using the surname ‘Siddi’ to emphasize the diasporic identity.” This is starting of utilizing cultural tools for construction of oral history.

The Siddi community has started using the stories of Habshis in medieval period for constructing narratives. The secretary of LAMPS (Yellapur), Krishna T Siddi says, “The Siddi community had realized the failure of religious structure as a source of development. Yet, the community was segregated on the religious lines and the leadership was taken by religious leaders. The tribes of Karnataka raised demands for separate and independent platform for political and socio-economic articulation. The establishment of LAMPS reflects that almost all the tribes faced similar problems at respective levels. The LAMPS has provided a new platform across religion based demarcations.
The representation in the LAMPS is based on the tribal identity. Earlier, the assimilation by the society had followed religion based trajectory. The LAMPS has brought the three most important leader of Siddi community of Karnataka on a single platform: Imman A.K. Siddi, Krishna T. Siddi and Lawrence Kaithan Siddi. The nomenclature reflect two elements of culture: the first of these three names reflect religion based assimilation at the local level whereas the last word Siddi reflects diasporic history. The post-1990 period has started new trajectory of consolidation on the basis of the abovementioned last word. The Siddi’s diasporic identity is again surfacing from the marginalized assimilation. Though, the religious structure of Hinduism, Islam and Christianity has given space for assertion, but the new circumstances demands new efforts which are definitely located outside the religion.

The Siddis are searching a path which will unite scattered Siddis inspite of regional centrifugal forces. The phenotypical features have become useful element for diasporic construction. Krishans Siddi says, “The Siddi community faced discrimination on basis of phenotypical features. The religion and NGO could not recognize our phenotypical features as part of mainstream society. The poor socio-economic condition was made an integral part of phenotypical features and nature. The Siddi community has realized the futility of getting respect from religious structure and NGOs. Therefore, the phenotypical features have become a feature for construction of homeland in continentalised Africa. Earlier, we were not very aware about Africa but the arrival of researchers and modes of communication have provided a lot of information about Africa.”

The folk culture has been reconfigured in the light continentalisation of homeland in framework of Africa in post-1990 period. The tribal based platforms are washing away the local color of religions. The community has realized that the development is dependent on the support of national and international agencies. Further, it will also help to construct new social image to live a dignified life. The Hiriyaru worship, Dhammam dance, the musical instruments, Ballads, oral history, African icons, African narratives everything is moving towards a larger vertical alliance within the framework of continentalisation of homeland in Africa.