

1. Subject of my research

This research attempts to understand the structure of “Urban Culture” in contemporary India. The primary purpose of my research is to understand the current phenomenon of Western Indian urban culture in respect to glocalization -- the conceptual coming together of ‘Rural – Urban – Overseas network’ culture in contemporary India. As Western India develops, there is an increasing connection between each sections. Economic liberalization policies have been accompanied by the growth of the new middle class in India. The new middle class is characterized by changing consumption practices and lifestyles.

I will focus how the new middle classes (e.g. as described by Varma, P. K. *The Great Indian Middle Class*. 1998.) that emerged during the post 1991 Indian economic liberalization. The middle classes established themselves by gaining economic and political power. I would like to investigate the social change and the transformation in urban culture in contemporary west India with the rising new middle class.

Particularly I would like to focus on *tamāśā* drama which is developing as popular media representing Western Indian urban culture. *Tamāśā* drama is the popular Maharashtrian folk theatre, a tradition that remains fairly strong and popular in rural areas, although it has often been viewed as vulgar or uncouth performances by more sophisticated urban dwellers. Originally, *tamāśā* performances commonly involved dramatic sketch comedy, love stories, and profane satire. Recently, however, *tamāśā* has been reevaluated. The performances have changed, with its plays and staging configurations becoming more elegant. Traditionally, only men went to watch *tamāśā*. Currently, however, *tamāśā* performances in urban theatres have become popular among women. With these changes, *tamāśā* now holds a place in the cultural identity of the new middle class. By investigating such changes, I would like to see how urban culture in western India has been transformed over the years. The changing Indian urban culture must be discussed in relation to the new public sphere. Presently Indian cities are developing through glocalization process based on a connecting network of ‘Rural – Urban – Overseas’ rather than the more common process of rural depopulation and urbanization.

Therefore transformation in cities and their culture must be studied in conjunction with the relationship between rural area and urban area and foreign countries.

2. Contents of 2010's research

In 2011, March 21st to 30th, I conducted research in State of Maharashtra, West India particularly Mumbai and Pune. In Mumbai, I collected documents from Mumbai University and National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA). Furthermore, I interviewed members of staff at Mumbai university. In addition, I researched on the *Bal Gandharv* theatre and *Aryabhushan* theatre in Pune city.

3. Impression and an experiences during fieldwork

Some people used to express displeasure when I told them that I study about *tamāsā*, saying , “Why did you choose this topic?” or “You have to change the topic and you can study on Indian classical dance or theatre”. However, people’s perception is changing these days. The same people started to provide me with the *tamāsā*’s information such as newspaper clippings. It left me deep impression. What are the key factors behind those people’s changing mind? Further investigations are required.

4. Achievement and future agenda

The main purpose to this time’s research in India was to collect documents from Mumbai University and to conduct research at the department of folklore in Mumbai University.

As a result, I acquired information on the historical background of the establishment of the Department of Folklore in Mumbai University. Moreover, I interviewed a lecturer and a head officer who work in the Department of Folklore.

However, as the length of my research was short, I was not able to conduct interviews with the students in the Department of folklore. I got a permission to interview the students from department, and I will try to get information from students next time

5. The aim of research in 2011

In 2011, I will study at SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London) from April till September. From October, I will join the Department of Social Anthropology, SOAS until end of the March 2012. Especially, I will conduct on research on the formation of “Urban Culture” in India under the supervision of Professor Stephen Hughes.