



TUNING THE WAR DRUM: THE RECONSTRUCTION OF 'PARAI' TOWARDS 'DALIT' EMPOWERMENT IN TAMILNADU, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Parai practice (drumming) in Tamilnadu, which has been a symbol of shame and servile duty of the Dalits (the erstwhile untouchables of India) for ages, has in the past three decades undergone radical changes. These changes that have involved social communication processes are assumed to have facilitated a reconstruction of Parai. This descriptive qualitative study looked into how Parai has been reconstructed, structured, and understood in the present forms of its practice in Tamilnadu. Addressing the question following an interpretive and critical cultural study approach, this study revealed the processes and outcomes of Parai reconstruction, structuring, and comprehension. The complexity of the reconstruction process involves multiple readings of the related events and situations with dominant codes, negotiated or oppositional codes by a plurality of stakeholders: various producers, promoters, performers, hosts, the Dalit and the Caste Hindu audiences, etc.

KEYWORDS: *Parai, communication, Academic Education, Empowerment, Women.*