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Research Article

Plants, Land, and Indigenous Philosophy: Poetics of Ecosemiosphere in Rituals of Tharu

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Abstract

This article argues that Tharu rituals reflect an ecocritical consciousness embedded within their songs and performances. Rooted in plants, land, and indigenous philosophy, Tharu rituals demonstrate an ecosemiospherial relation between people and nature. Their rituals signify beyond simple cultural expressions, serving as vital parts of the environmental humanities. These practices emphasize the often-overlooked relationship between sustainability and daily life by illustrating how traditional customs support ecological balance. Viewing Tharu rituals through the lenses of ecology and semiotics provides valuable insights into how communities function as environmental entities. In particular, the community's Lwangi Puja ritual, currently threatened by rising river pollution, highlights the urgent need to preserve such rituals, which have historically promoted community well-being. These rituals exemplify ecological identity formation through myth, culture, and environment. Using the theories of Charles Sanders Peirce and Jakob von Uexküll, this article explores the relations between physical and cultural meanings across the material and spiritual aspects of Tharu worldview. The Tharu people express their understanding of nature through myths, stories, and customs woven into their relationship with the land. By analyzing Tharu folk performances through ecological and semiotic perspectives, this article demonstrates how indigenous communities function as dynamic environmental entities and contribute valuable insights to contemporary ecological discourse.

Keywords: Ecosemiosphere, ecosemiotics, Tharu rituals, immaterial ecology

Introduction

As an indigenous community, the Tharu perform numerous rituals involving plants and animals to honor ancestors and promote healing. They regard the land as sacred and worship it as 'bhuiyar,' the land god, whose shrine is typically found in the southern part of the village. Tharu rituals share many characteristics with Hindu cultural practices, including festivals such as

Dashain and Tihar. During Dashain, babari flowers (also known as sweet basil) are used in worship, valued for both their ritual significance and medicinal properties. These practices show how nature influences Tharu rituals, connecting collective memory, history, and identity to the surrounding environment. The Tharu rely on rivers for fishing, farming, and hygiene. Rivers also symbolize a transition from the physical to the spiritual. For example, in death rituals, the deceased is given fire beside a river that marks the boundary of their civilization. Likewise, forests represent their patience and strength. Tharu people once lived closely with nature and protected it as a vital part of their lives. Today, they face alienation from modern states, where nature becomes a hunted commodity. Their land has been turned into factories that produce acidic, unhealthy products. Modern farming has increased yields but damaged the organic life they were known for. Despite these changes, the Tharu still maintain a deep spiritual bond with their environment. By analyzing these sign systems of land, water, and ritual through the lens of Peircean semiotics, this articlediscusses how these elements shape the Tharu ecological identity.

Literature Review

Ecosemiosphere encompasses meanings derived from human activities and their impacts on the environment, as Alfred KentigernSiewers (2014) defined it: the meaningful, shared environment associated with regions inhabited by humans (p. 50). It also covers the role of the environment in shaping human activities and connects daily life with environmental sustainability. The ecosemiosphere helps humans recognize their life as ecological creatures within their physical environment. Similarly, von Uexküll (2010), as cited in Siewers (2014, p. 14), described nature as a text. He described nature-text as a musical symphony of human and landscape narratives. For him, ecosemiotics bridges the gap between culture and nature through signs. He argued that the universe functions through ecological intelligent design rather than anthropocentric semiotics and design.

While these theoretical frameworks offer valuable insights, they also have limitations when applied to Tharu rituals. For instance, the ecosemiosphere, though comprehensive, may oversimplify the complex and distinct elements of Tharu culture by merging them under a single environmental umbrella. Additionally, von Uexküll's concept, which focuses on subjective experience, might overlook the communal aspects inherent in Tharu rituals, which are essential to understanding their collective ecological identity. For example, Peirce's model might

inaccurately depict the dynamic interactions in Tharu ceremonies as merely individual sign processes, failing to capture the shared cultural expressions central to these practices.

Moreover, Western frameworks often regard nature as separate from culture, a perspective that fails to resonate with Tharu customs, where such distinctions are blurred. Critics might contend that applying these Western theoretical models to indigenous contexts risks imposing an external interpretive lens that may not align with, or fully capture, the Tharu community's perspectives and lived experiences. This raises critical questions about the relevance and appropriateness of such frameworks for studying non-Western cultures. Nonetheless, when synthesized, Peirce's triad, which explores the dynamic relationship between the sign, object, and interpretant; von Uexküll's concept of Umwelt, emphasizing an organism's subjective world; and Siewers'secosemiosphere theory converge into a holistic framework. By explicitly combining these theories, this synthesis becomes necessary, as it allows for a more nuanced understanding of Tharu rituals as interactions within an ecology of meaning, in which symbols and signs interpret and define their ecological connections. This integrated approach enables the analysis to account for both individual experiences and community dynamics, ensuring a thorough examination of the Tharu ecological identity within their cultural context.

Piers (1998) suggested that meaningful relationships are present in the natural world. He argued that growth occurs through a passionate drive to fulfill another's highest purpose (logos), facilitated by reciprocal communication (as cited in Siewers, 2014, p. 26). He created a triadic model linking the environment, the sign, and the interpretant, highlighting their interconnectedness in eco-semiotics. This model depicts the non-human environment as a landscape filled with meaning. Contemporary perspectives often view the self as an independent entity, a view that conflicts with pre-modern beliefs and separates humans from nature. Such a perspective fosters a discourse where humans and nature are seen as separate. Indigenous cultures, like pre-modern ecosemiotics, do not objectify their land and environment but perceive them as integral to their culture. Kristeva (1989) argued that modern ideas promote an archetype of extreme individualism that neglects nature and the divine spirit (as cited in Siewers, 2014, p. 32). The Tharus, however, oppose this extreme individualism both culturally and practically.

Coleridge (1817) discussed "substantial" and "abstract" human knowledge, linking the sublime to the environmental humanities. He argued that substantial knowledge involves understanding unity with the non-human world, whereas abstract knowledge arises when humans

regard themselves and their knowledge as separate from nature (as cited in Siewers, 2014, p. 38). Siewers compared von Uexkull's symphony to Coleridge's cosmic song. Substantial knowledge is both celestial and ecological, aligning with Pierce's model of environmental meaning-making. This idea also connects to Longinus's concept of the sublime. In literature, this idea leads to ecopoetics, which Jonathan Bate (2000) described as "an imaginative reunification of mind and nature" (as cited in Siewers, 2014, p. 47). Consequently, this concept functions as an ecopoesis that interprets both text and nature.

Landscapes perform culture because their inhabitants shape them. Studying nature as the performance of culture presents life as a blend of biosemiotics and quantum physics. Native American Studies scholar Kathryn W. Shanley stated that narratives about landscapes offer shared experiences and multiple perspectives on life (as cited in Siewers, 2014, p. 52). Such practices are evident in Indigenous communities. This understanding challenges modern materialistic representations of humanity and nature. Such ideas, present in Tharu rituals and folk poetics, reveal resources that are often overlooked in discussions of environmental problems.

Similarly, Emmett and Nye (2017) argued that, compared with Western or capitalist societies, indigenous peoples regard humanity as part of nature rather than separate from it (p. 24). They utilize the land more organically than Western modern societies do. In such communities, the concept of place-making serves a psychological function, fostering emotional intimacy and a connection between the human self and the environment. Likewise, Thoreau stated that soil holds agricultural memory for peasants; instead of drying it out, they inscribe their history on it (Besson et al., 2014, p. 4). For them, the soil is not only a memory of nature but also of past life. As Lawrence Buell stated, the 'ecological imagination' conveyed through literature of nature encourages acknowledgement and respect for all life from prehistory to the present (Besson et al., 2014, p. 10). Therefore, the link between the memory of origins and ecological awareness emphasizes the relationship between myth and ecology.

Indigenous peoples' knowledge of plants must be communicated through scientific research. Since the relationship between humans and nonhumans is embedded in a cultural and historical context, artistic interpretations of humans must also reflect an affinity for forests, plants, and animals. Similarly, Pradeep Singh et al. (2015) described Graphtophyllumpictum (G. pictum), commonly known as Joseph's coat in English, being used in traditional folk medicine by indigenous people in India to enhance fertility, as a poultice for cuts, wounds, and all kinds of

swelling, and for the treatment of ulcers, abscesses, haemorrhoids, constipation, rheumatism, urinary infection, scabies, hepatomegaly, and ear diseases (p. 223). In the same vein, Sosnowska and Kujawska (2014) argued that myths of plant origin function as an agency for writing history into their landscapes, enveloping and imparting their historical memory (p. 174).

Indigenous people, despite their genetic traits, possess knowledge of native medicinal plants used to prepare anti-malarial remedies (Gani et al., 2019, pp. 30-31). Their practice of using plant leaves for medicine preserves nature, as they utilize leaves rather than underground parts such as roots and bark. However, Tharu land has suffered from the slow violence of modernization, evidenced by soil degradation and pollution from industrial runoff. Factory contaminants have introduced harmful substances into the ecosystem, gradually reducing soil fertility and affecting long-term health. Recognizing these long-term ecological damages makes the feeling of alienation and disconnection from traditional practices more tangible. Therefore, ethnobotany also helps us understand conventional tribal cultures, which are vital for sustainable development. Similarly, Rose (2005) argued that plant utility should not be judged solely from an anthropocentric perspective, as plants considered insignificant to humans may be just as important to other non-human beings (p. 296). According to Rose, indigenous practices often reflect awareness of such ecological patterns. Understanding these patterns enhances synergistic relationships among species. As a result, a set of ecocentric concepts rooted in indigenous knowledge fosters meaningful dialogue between humans and nature.

Guanio-Uluru (2021) developed a phyto-analysis map to illustrate how studying plants can help us understand the ecocentric view of nature in culture (p. 153, Fig. 154). She described six factors crucial to understanding a plant: mediation, agency, character, environment, passivity, and instrumental value, as well as the interconnections among science, art, philosophy, religion, myth, and indigenous tradition. She explained how these elements of phytoanalysis link plant ecology to culture. She stated, “the weeds fulfil a symbolic function in the story as representatives of those situated at the bottom of the social hierarchy” (p. 158). Therefore, this method not only helps us understand a plant’s cultural significance but also enables us to analyze literature (especially children’s literature) from an ecocentric perspective. Similarly, Boddy (2020), in her comprehensive book that discusses the seasonal histories of plants and people, covered all seasonal flowers and their semiosis. She argued:

> Flowers are among the oldest media through which we communicate. We send them, or their representations, to announce romantic intentions, convey condolences, or proffer apologies. They play a part in public health campaigns and in the remembrance of, as well as the opposition to, war. (p. 11-12)

Every flower or plant communicates with us. These messages explore themes of love, death, social class, fashion, weather, art, illness, politics, and the passage of time and space. Similarly, plants have often played a key role in indigenous knowledge, whether in relation to their antimicrobial properties, medicinal uses, or indigenous entrepreneurship (Mombale, 2023; Adil et al., 2022; Ishtiaq et al., 2021; Kanakhara et al., 2018; Arya & Sharma, 2016; Fred-Jayesim et al., 2015; Sharma et al., 2014; Torri, 2014; Ali et al., 2011). Their research linked the extensive knowledge of medicinal and folkloric plants among indigenous and tribal communities to the preservation of traditional knowledge and plant ecology.

Similarly, Pelcher (2024) argued that Dadaism's photomontage portraiture ironically depicted the slow violence inflicted on nature by the world wars. He argued, "Dadaists use ready-made commodities, photomontages, ironic manifestos to perform the irony of modern material life" (p. 195). Their aesthetic practices critically address the ecological destruction of modern institutionalised life. Similarly, Neimanis et al. (2015) developed the concept of critical posthumanities as a philosophical approach to integrating nature into the humanities. She argued, "We need environmental humanities as critical posthumanities, not as a rejection of the methods and insights of the humanities, but as a way of enriching and thickening them through the insights and experiences of postdisciplinary inquiry" (p. 90). For her, revitalizing the modern-day environmental humanities demands a critical posthumanities approach. Likewise, Yusoff (2021) attributed the inhumane geoengineering of the environment to capitalism (p. 667). She found human materialistic and sociopolitical projects responsible for environmental destruction.

Plants play a crucial role in ecology and environmental humanities. Indigenous and tribal communities often use traditional knowledge and practices to utilize plants in ways that support ecological balance. In Nepal, the Tharu community honors plants as deities, linking them to both survival and spirituality. Plants and flowers are central to their cultural rituals, serving as offerings in worship and prayers to ancestral spirits. Additionally, rivers and land are equally important divinities to them, believed to provide vital resources and blessings. Through these practices, nature is elevated to a spiritual level, helping to achieve higher community goals.

Methods and Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative approach based on e-library research, critically examining scholarly works on environmental humanities, eco-semiotics, plants, land, and indigenous identity. Relevant texts, songs, and ritual practices are critically interpreted using the poetics of ecology and indigeneity.The song lyrics obtained from *YouTube* were translated into English by the researcher and analyzed using an ecocritical framework. The analysis focuses on identifying recurring ideas related to ecological identity and the relationship between humans and nature. To interpret symbolic meanings and environmental connections in Tharu folk performances, the study draws on the theoretical frameworks of Charles Sanders Peirce, Deborah Bird Rose, and Jakob von Uexküll. The work of these environmental sociologists helps explain the interconnected material and cultural dimensions of Tharu's ecological understanding.

Poetics of Ecosemiosis in Tharu Songs

Tharu folk performances and rituals embody the poetics of ecosemiosis, expressing their tribal connection with nature. Tharus worship and pray to their pagan gods, regarded as the primary benefactors of their well-being, blending ecological and spiritual elements. In their folksongs, local flowers and plants are celebrated for their cultural significance and symbolism. The use of sweet basil flowers in garlands during the tika ceremony of their main festival, Dashain, is especially significant, as it aligns with Peirce's semiotic theory by symbolizing blessings and protection and representing purity and renewal. This practice supports the argument that Tharu rituals vividly reflect a harmonious relationship with the natural world emphasizing ecological awareness and the preservation of identity. For example, during the *bhaitika* ceremony, garlands of marigolds and globe amaranth are woven to express the enduring bond between siblings, wishing brothers a long life and protection under divine favor, thereby indicating cultural continuity through semiotic processes. This can also be linked to von Uexküll's concept of Umwelt, in which the subjective world of ritual participants finds expression through the flowers used. These kinds of rituals and belief systems intertwine cultural and ecological significance, supporting the idea of environmental interconnectedness.

Beyond flowers, Tharu rituals also involve consuming specific foods, such as wild mushrooms, black mushrooms (Schleroderma sp.), and earthballs. These foods are gathered and

prepared according to traditions that emphasize ecological knowledge and sustainable practices, thereby embedding environmental care within customary practices. Such practices align with Siewers' ecosemiosphere theory, which holds that the interaction between cultural rituals and ecological settings creates a shared space of meaning. This article argues that the connection between nature and spirituality is more than symbolic; it is a living testament to the Tharu's adaptive strategies for maintaining their ecological identity. This deep integration of nature and spirituality is exemplified in the Tharu*maangar* song, where a newlywed conveys her emotions through imagery of tree leaves. These songs convey the cultural meanings attached to natural elements within the Tharu worldview, transforming everyday aspects of the environment into symbols of personal and community identity, thereby supporting the essay's main argument: the vital link between cultural practices and environmental sustainability.

Tharus still rely on forest plants and shrubs for survival, drawing on knowledge passed down from their ancestors. They have stopped hunting animals and birds in the forest, as the necessary meat-producing species have already been domesticated. Additionally, when harvesting wild plants, they make sure to leave seeds to ensure future growth. They see forest resources as companions rather than temporary treasures. These relationships are part of their daily lives and rituals, symbolizing the harmony between their life and culture. This strong bond with nature highlights the Tharu's ecological identity and underscores the importance of sustainable practices to maintain environmental balance.

Tharus need fungi such as the giant polypore (Polyporusgiganteus) in their shamanic rituals. Similarly, Tharu shamans, also known locally as *guruwa* or *bharra*, need an ant-fungus, prepared inside ant mounds or on tree stems, to perform their shamanic rituals. These rituals are performed during family mishaps and other undesirable circumstances affecting members of the Tharu community. Moreover, Tharu shamans also require the head skull of an ox to conduct tantric rituals aimed at chasing away demonic and satanic evil spirits from any community member suffering from such attacks. The most important ritual, known as Lwangi Puja, takes place in June and July. This ritual involves prayers to their pagan gods for blessings and a good harvest. These practices show the strong connection between Tharu traditions and ecological elements, emphasizing the central role of the ecosemiosphere in their cultural and spiritual life.

Since the Tharu tribe believes in the seasonal cycle and depends on agriculture for their livelihood, they perform various rituals to ensure a successful harvest. Their first festival,

GurahiAsraina (beating dragonflies), also reflects themes of plants, insects, and their survival. According to their faith, beating dragonflies is believed to ward off all diseases and insects that harm their crops. Every year, community members gather at the village corner, bringing cooked and roasted corn, sautéed peas and chickpeas, along with homemade wine. They beat the dolls of dragonflies, symbolizing the insects that have damaged their crops, and share lentils and beans as a sign of successful rituals. These actions connect the community with its environment.

Ecosemiosphere rituals are clearly evident in their dance songs as well. In the song "PhuliGailaiGendaGodauli" (Marigolds Have Bloomed, 2024), the performers express their love by symbolizing it with flowers: "The marigolds and daisies have bloomed/ oh my dear beloved you have enriched the beauty of the garden." They compare the sweetness of their love to the fragrant smell of basil, marigolds, roses, and other flowers. The flowers in the song represent love, affection, warmth, and emotion. A flower symbolizes the closeness and emotional bond between lovers. Similarly, in the song "BarkaBanwa" (Big Forest,2017), the singers emphasize the importance of protecting the dense forests of the Tarai belt in Kailali district. They encourage the performers and listeners to visit the big forest, "Basanta." Basanta is the local name for the dense, widespread forest in the Tarai belt, which is important to the Tharus. The forest provides basic needs for survival, including food, water, fodder, and timber. Additionally, the song promotes the idea of the ecosemiosphere, implying that their survival depends on conserving wild plants and animals. Therefore, the song acts as a plea to preserve the forests of the Tarai belt:

> Oh, friends, welcome to the Big Forest Basanta / We will explore it together.
> The flowers of the kesh and semul trees have started to bloom.
> In the forest, the basanti flower has blossomed, and the kamaiya flower blooms there as well.
> In June and July, the Jamun fruits ripen, and the silk cotton tree's flowers sway lightly in the wind. (BarkaBanwaTharu song)

Similarly, in the song "MatiKoreGaili" (went to gather the earth,2017), the singers depict the Tharu lifestyle of building mud houses. The earth is an essential resource for constructing homes for the Tharu, who live in thatched-roof mud dwellings. The song describes their efforts to dig and gather high-quality earth for their houses. Additionally, the song symbolizes the emotional bonds among Tharu youths, who find opportunities to deepen their connections and love for one

another. The boys and girls share their feelings during their field trip to collect the earth. Therefore, the song highlights the significance of land for the Tharu community: Went to dig at the same spot / My friends made me carry earth for my beloved / Oh, friends, please take me to my beloved's house (MatiKoreGailiTharu song).

Similarly, the song "Pahilekjamana me" (In earlier times, 2017) highlights the wrongdoing of deforestation and its wider effects:The green jungle trees are our property / Don't cut down the trees of Sonal Lake; the crab holes will go dry / The water of Bulbul Lake is fresh and cold, and it will quench the thirst and hunger.As the song argues, extensive deforestation has led to shortages of firewood, timber, and fodder. The song also urges that fishing not be done in the rivers using poison. Additionally, it appeals against destroying wetland trees and plants, as such actions would damage water resources, fish, and other aquatic creatures, such as crabs. Crabs are a primary source of food and protein for the Tharus. Protecting natural and wetland resources will help them maintain their food supply, which is vital for their survival.

Similarly, in the song "Baigamturegaili" (Picking berries, 2017), the singers highlight a key activity of the Tharu way of life. In the Tharu community, picking berries, such as Indian jujube, is essential for their survival, providing a vital food source during both winter and summer. They harvest the berries in summer and use them to make pickles or add them to soup on hot days. The Tharu community is a hunting-and-gathering society that mainly relies on collecting food from forests, wildlands, and rivers. Today, collecting berries is a sacred ritual for them. However, the decline of these practices among the new generation of Tharu youths raises important questions about the preservation of their cultural and behavioral morals and traditions. The community's core practices have largely faded, as modern lifestyles and materialism have influenced them.

Similarly, in the song "GhodaGhoditaluwa me haan" (Lake Ghodaghodi, 2023), the singers praise the lake's significance, as it is one of the most sacred lakesfor the Tharus of Kailali district:The birds sing at Lake Ghodaghodi / Oh, how beautiful the lake looks / Oh, friends, do not harm the birds of the lake; it will become lonely / The fish and colorful birds play here. According to legend, the horse and the she-horse once sought shelter at the lake, circled it, and fell in love with its beauty, making the lake their permanent home. Both the horse and the she-horse eventually lost their lives by immersing themselves in the lake. Since then, the lake has become a vital spiritual and religious site for both Tharus and non-Tharus in the district. It is also

listed among the world's wetland areas. The lake provides habitat for migratory birds arriving from around the world. The birds, fish, wild animals, and plants coexist in an ecologically symbiotic relationship at the lake.

Similarly, in another song, "GhoriGhoraaihomahimaapar" (Lake GhodaGhodi 2, 2018),the singers mention water lilies and lotuses blooming in the lake. The song expresses the love of a young couple in the lake's tranquil, pristine environment. The boy admires the girl's youth and beauty, comparing her to a fully bloomed marigold. In Tharu folk performances, nature often symbolizes the everlasting nature of their devotion, love, and pure emotions. Nature and its symbols represent the natural world, where true love equates to perfection—an idea that nature embodies for them. Using nature and its resources highlights the sincerity and depth of their feelings, reflecting the humble, honest, and loyal nature of Nepal's tribal communities.

Similarly, in the song, "Hey Bhagwan Deu Vardan" (Oh God bless us, 2017), Tharus worship the land as their god of fertility and survival. They have a special place designated in the south of the village. They establish the 'Bhuihar', the land god, as a superconscious, superpowerful being to protect them from bad crops and seasons. The gods are consulted for every ritual and ceremony. The entire village worships the god through proper rituals as directed by the head shaman, known as the 'guruwa' or 'bharra.' The village provides sacrifices and materials needed for prayers to the land god.

Similarly, during poor harvest seasons or dry periods, the Tharus perform a special ritual called 'stealing the cow' (gaiyalutaina). When there is no rain in summer, they 'steal' a cow from a nearby village and wait for that village to negotiate its return. This negotiation features songs seeking permission, fostering an ethical exchange that embodies reciprocity and mutual respect between communities. The ritual demonstrates an indigenous resource-sharing principle: the cow is returned after the singing, and ideally, the rain follows shortly afterwards. Only women participate in this ritual, dressed entirely in white linen, which further emphasizes its cultural and ethical importance. Such survival rituals highlight the deep connection between culture and ecology, showcasing the ecosemiotics embedded in their traditions. The song "Puttha me lehenga, kaane me kanbaali" (Wearing lehenga and earrings, 2025) visualizes the similar Tharu women wearing their traditional attire before going to their farmlands:

Wearing the lehenga at the waist, earrings in the ears, and a necklace around the neck.
The village woman goes to fetch water at dawn.

> The housewife wakes up at the first crow of the rooster.
> Carrying the plow and yoke on her shoulders, the farmer heads to the farmland.
> The woman arrives with lunch at the farm. (Puttha me lehenga, kaane me kanbaaliTharu song)

Tharu rituals encompass ecological and cultural semiotics as they relate to daily life, food sources, and the use of medicinal plants. These traditions exhibit a comprehensive connection with nature and the cyclic patterns of the ecosystem. Rituals and folk performances reflect the community's strong relationship with their environment, demonstrating an integration of ecological and cultural practices. Contemporary folklore often seeks to revive these traditional connections through adaptation and improvisation, responding to modern needs. An example is the community's seed-saving protocol, which underscores sustainable farming by selecting and storing seeds from the best plants each season. This practice helps preserve local plant varieties, enhances biodiversity, and maintains ecological balance.

These practices impact environmental policy and research by highlighting the need to incorporate traditional knowledge into sustainable land management. Policymakers can leverage Tharu seed-saving techniques to enhance biodiversity, supporting diverse crops and plants through indigenous resource management. Research into Tharu ecological methods could also provide valuable insights into ecosystem restoration, showcasing the community's resilience in maintaining environmental balance. Nonetheless, integrating Tharu practices into policy faces challenges, including political resistance, economic constraints, and social acceptance. Political issues may arise from conflicts between local communities and government objectives, while financialconstraints may limit the availability of resources for widespread adoption. Socially, resistance from communities used to conventional methods may occur, requiring extensive community engagement and education to promote acceptance of these traditional practices.

Modern performances blend contemporary insights with traditional values, reflecting a desire to conserve cultural practices amid social change. However, these traditions face challenges. The Tharu community faces significant tensions and losses due to modernization pressures that threaten their beliefs. Industrialization and land requisitions have caused environmental damage, putting their ecological traditions at risk. Despite these issues, ongoing performances and celebrations of cultural identity indicate a revival of Tharuecosemiotics. Their ecosemiotic practices show a scientific approach that promotes inclusive ecological growth and

sustainability. Examining Tharu culture reveals how ecological practices are integrated into their cultural frameworks, demonstrating the community's resilience and adaptability in the face of external pressures.

Conclusion

Tharu rituals and folk performances are deeply connected to nature and their homeland. Nature plays a key role in the survival and identity of the Tharu community. Their spiritual beliefs are expressed through folklore, which helps build community bonds and highlights the importance of ritual practices. The Tharu reflect on their relationship with the land, the losses caused by shifting political boundaries, and the challenges from external influences. Despite these difficulties, their performances continue to emphasize respect for and reliance on nature. Nature influences their spiritual beliefs and inspires songs that see it as the ultimate source of meaning. Rituals are viewed as crucial for maintaining ecological balance. Combining culture and ecology in Tharu rituals offers valuable insights for environmental policy and research, encouraging the integration of traditional knowledge into modern sustainability efforts. This approach supports the integration of indigenous wisdom into ecological decision-making, fostering a more harmonious relationship between humans and nature. Hence, this article argues that the poetics of the Tharu ecosphere offers modern-day humanity crucial insights for living in the ethics and harmony of plants, land, nature, and the cultural emotions of humanity.

Policymakers could implement Tharu seed-saving techniques to enhance crop diversity and strengthen resilience in agricultural strategies. Additionally, encouraging community-led forest management rooted in Tharu traditions may increase local engagement and support ecosystem restoration. Collaborating with the Tharu community in research can validate results and boost the resilience of local ecosystems, recognizing the importance of indigenous knowledge. However, this study has limitations, including reliance on qualitative data from a specific community, which may limit broader generalizations. Interpreting indigenous practices without fully understanding the cultural context can also limit the depth of insight. The research emphasized ethical considerations and respectfully reflected the Tharu community's views, fostering reciprocity by sharing findings for their validation and input.

Research on Tharu practices may have broader relevance to other indigenous or ecological contexts. These insights could be adapted by similar communities experiencing

environmental changes or cultural decline as a result of modernization. The Tharu's methods of environmental stewardship and community rituals could serve as models for other cultures seeking sustainable ways to coexist with the environment. By comparing the Tharu community with other indigenous groups worldwide, we can identify common strategies that promote ecological conservation and strengthen cultural identities, both locally and globally. This could enhance dialogue among indigenous communities, fostering a shared view of nature as a cooperative partner rather than merely a resource.

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