

Selected Urban legends prevalent in Ranchi as Campus Lore

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Abstract: Campus lore is the term used to describe the narratives with composition of cultural element like myths, stories, and traditions that have developed on college or university campuses. Campus lore is a one sort among the eleven, recognised by J H Brunvand as Urban Legends. Urban legends are stories in a current setting that are recounted as actual individual experiences but include conventional variants that show their legendary character are the easiest subject in which the student may see the development of legends. This paper will try to elaborate about the term campus lore and urban legends and will explain the campus lores found in the Ranchi district. The data has been composed by both the primary and secondary sources.

Key Words: Folklore, Uran Legend, Campus Lore, Culture, Tradition

INTRODUCTION

Traditions within a culture are passed down orally and preserved by its people; this is known as folklore. These traditions usually contain myths, music, stories, folklore, and history. Traditions are transmitted from one generation to the next and are actively preserved by the local community. People can provide context for their environment with its help. Every culture has its own historical context and customs, which means that every culture's interpretation of folklore is also different. Folklore encompasses all information shared through overhearing conversations, all crafts and processes that are taught through constraints and examples, as well as the end product of such crafts. Legend is an important folklore genre that has become one of the most interesting subjects for in-depth research. The Standard Dictionary of Folklore defines a legend as a story that is supposedly based on truth and incorporates a range of traditional materials recounted about a person, location, or incident. There were four preliminary categories of legends created on the basis of the resources found one of them was urban legend.

Urban legends are often characterized by their sensational and memorable nature, which makes them easy to remember and retell. They spread through word of mouth, the internet, and other forms of media, contributing to their enduring popularity. These are usually based on real-life fears, anxieties, or moral lessons, they are often exaggerated or distorted for dramatic effect. They can serve various purposes such as cautionary tales, entertainment, or the expression of societal concerns (Brunvand, 2001). Urban legends are not typically based on factual events, and many have been debunked over time. The appeal of urban legends are false news stems from the fact that material provides internet entertainment, stories are topical, sensation and refer to important aspects of everyday life. Additionally sharing is an important form of social engagement. The fact that stories are believable, intuitive or plausible make them especially compelling, despite a lack of evidence. Sociologically, information contained within urban legends and false news offers insights into societal fears and anxieties. Indeed, concerns stimulate new accounts, influence narrative longevity, and determine when old stories resurface. Essentially people enjoy a good topical story even when they suspect it is not entirely true. Urban legends are frequently popular for three reasons: a thrilling plot, a component of true belief, and a warning or moral that is either expressed or implicit. Only a few urban legends have supernatural themes, but they all have at least one or two extremely bizarre elements. This reality doesn't disturb the general public's belief in them very much because people from all walks of life credit them and numerous newspapers routinely repeat them, or radio pundits present them as fact.

Urban legends symbolise human struggles and survival aspirations while expressing dread of unfamiliar species and dangerous situations. These also seem to be immediate responses to the regular inquiries made by both the general public and the upper classes of today's cities. (Das, 2007).

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Campus lore is the term used to describe the myths, stories, and traditions that have developed on college or university campuses. These verbal narratives frequently feature particular places, occasions, or even individuals connected to the organisations. Campus lore is a common tool used by students, teachers, and alumni to foster a sense of identity and community. It can contain both true and made-up narratives. Because of their unproven mystique, legends are a special kind of storytelling that have an impact on autonomous, functional communities on campuses as well as on daily life. The American historian J.H. Brunvand has recognised eleven sorts of urban legends, including the one-word exam question, and the campus tale is one of them. Indeed, they have become widely shared and ingrained among university students, and they have grown to be a significant aspect of the campus culture today (Wei, 2023).

One of the entertaining and conversational approach to learn about the school is through campus tales. Only individuals who have lived there can possibly comprehend some of the content of school legends due to their locale. This helps create a strong sense of community among students by fostering a common campus culture and shared identities. People can therefore continue to spread these school legends and set themselves apart in this way outside of the college setting thanks to this continuity of identity.

Campus lore includes Ghost stories, Mascot traditions, Secret societies, Notable alumni, Pranks and rivalries, Unique traditions, and Academic challenges.

- Ghost stories: Urban legends about haunting buildings or locations abound on campuses, many of which have colourful origin stories.
- Mascot traditions: stories concerning the origins of a school's mascot and the customs and beliefs that surround it.
- Secret societies: There are rumours in certain schools about exclusive clubs or covert groups that engage in enigmatic activities and rituals.
- Notable alumni: Famous graduates are frequently honoured on campuses, and legends about them and their schools can spread throughout the campus.
- Pranks and rivalries: School rivalries or renowned pranks can become the stuff of campus mythology.
- Unique traditions: Every campus may have its own distinct traditions and customs, such as the yearly bare bike ride or the kissing tree where students exchange greetings.
- Academic challenges: Narratives of exceptionally challenging or unforgettable homework assignments, tests, or instructors are transmitted throughout time.
- Natural Objects: Natural objects like big and old trees, old ponds which are inside the campus can be the part of campus lore.

The university community's shared history and sense of belonging are fostered by these customs and tales. When alumni think back on their time on campus, they might also bring back memories and feelings of humour.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Primary and secondary data from a variety of sources, such as books, research papers, magazines, and websites, have been gathered for exploratory and descriptive research. Literature analysis relating to the subject and ideas has been done.

DISCUSSION

Ranchi is the capital city of Jharkhand. It is closely tied to the broadly historical and cultural developments of the region. In ancient times the region was inhabited by various indigenous tribal communities. Here the Munda and the Oraon tribe have rich cultural heritage and have been the original inhabitants of the chhotanagpur plateau. During the colonial period, Ranchi and the surroundings region came under British rule. The British established Ranchi as a hill station and a centre for their administrative activities in the region. The tribal communities of the region resisted British colonial rule leading to several tribal uprisings. In the modern era, Ranchi was grown as a political administrative, and industrial centre in Jharkhand. The region has experienced rapid urbanization and development, with improvements in infrastructure, education, and facilities.

When Jharkhand was inhabited, the ancient Aryans referred to it as "forest territory." The district was dominated by the Oraon and Munda tribes combined. They were unaffected by external circumstances and completely autonomous. The mediaeval period is frequently referred to as the Mughal period because of the Mughals' influence throughout that time. The Chhota Nagpur plateau was referred to as Jharkhand in Muslim times. They were beaten in 1832 by Captain Wilkinson's soldiers. The development of education in the region has been considerably aided by the attention that Ranchi has received from numerous Christian missions. In 1850, the first Christian missionaries arrived in the district, and in 1845, the first tribe members were converted to Christianity (Singh, 2018).

Ranchi and the surrounding areas have a rich cultural heritage with a strong influence of tribal traditions and custom. The region is known for its tribal art, dance and music which continue to be an integral part of the local culture. It

contains Ancient, Medieval and Modern History of different rulers and tribes. There are various campus lores found in the district.

I. **F13. HEC**

F13. HEC colony is situated at Dhurwa in Ranchi district. According to the local people, the urban legend behind the colony is that once upon a time, a brother-sister both did suicide together and now they can be seen walking on the walls of the house. Earlier the government servants used to live in that colony later due to number of unpleasant events the Corporation stopped allotting that house because none of the occupants were able to survive there.

II. **Imam Kothi, Booty More**

Imam Kothi is a magnificent and ancient palace situated near Booty More in Ranchi. The legend behind the story is that Sir Sayeed Ali Imam, Prime Minister of Nizam of Hyderabad, was making this building for his third wife. However, he died due to illness before the house was completed. The graves of Imam Sahab and his wife rest in an adjoining premise. It is said that the owner of the house still guards the house. There have been multiple incidents, whoever looks at the Imam Kothi as secure place to hangout suffers badly (Tudu, p. 77).

III. **Old Police Station, Jaganathpur**

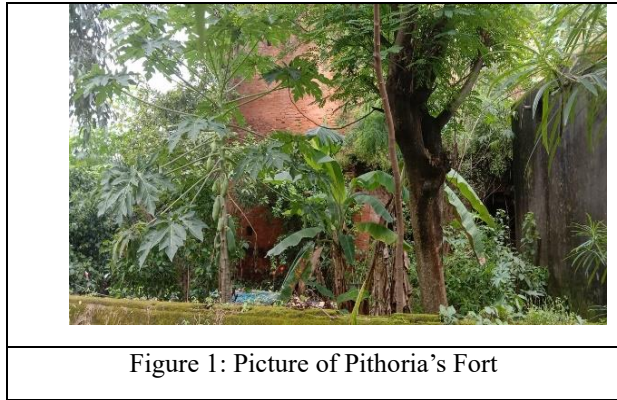
The urban legend about the place is that in the midnight the rooms of the old building full of the screams of women and children firing cannot controls those scream it continues for one hour. Therefore, the guards on the duty during the night period do not dare to sleep they spend their night awaking and talking with each other. Now there one statue of Hanuman has placed so that, it may reduce the fear of guards on duty or may it control those screams (Tudu, p. 77).

IV. **TB Sanatorium, Ranchi**

TB Sanatorium used to run by the British and after some time it was transformed into Medical Training College. The TB patients were cured here but once some patients killed the doctor there and later the patients also started to die themselves. That event seemed so scary that people stopped to visit that hospital and at present the local people living there do not goes near to that building due to scare (Tudu, p. 78).

V. **Lore of Pithoria's Haunted Fort**

This incident took place before 1857. Jagatpal Ganjhu was a woodcutter who worked there. He sold coal once as well. The British were pillaging India at that time. One day, they were robbing gold and silver while going with their group of mules. A few of bags toppled in the excavation close to Pithoria. Being a woodcutter, Jagatpal Ganjhu would often visit the forest early in the morning. Luckily, he discovered sacks filled with gold and silver in the excavation. He used that treasure to construct a three-story fort throughout the years. As a result, he began to be associated with the wealthy, began to visit the Maharaj of Ratu, and eventually became friends with him. After receiving the Jamindari of Pithoria from Ratu Maharaj, he assumed the name "Jagatpal Singh" from Jagatpal Ganjhu. Ratu Maharaj's relative, Thakur Vishwanath Shahi, was a well-known independence warrior in Chhota Nagpur at the time. Consequently, Jagatpal Singh and Thakur Vishwanath Sahi met and became friends at a number of Ratu Maharaj events. Despite all of this, Jagatpal Singh maintained cordial ties with the British, who gave him the title "Rai Bahadur" for their own purposes. It was the era of the Revolt of 1857, the country's first struggle of independence. Thakur Vishwanath Shahi, Pandey Ganpat Rai, and Sheikh Bikhari were the notable fighters in the Chhotanagpur region who the entire British force was defeated. Because of his avaricious attitude and good relations with the British, Jagatpal Singh was asked to assist the British in apprehending Thakur Vishwanath Sahi and his associates. As per the arrangement, Jagatpal Singh invited them (Pandey Ganpat Rai and Thakur Vishwanath Shahi) to a feast. They had no idea of his terrible scheme. The British army was already on the scene, and they apprehended them both from the fort of Pithoria as arranged. Both of them were found guilty and given the death penalty. It was determined to hang the executioner from a banyan tree in Ranchi, which is close to Kachahri. All of this was carried out based on Jagatpal Singh's testimony. Their carcasses were consumed by crows and eagles after they were executed in public and left hanging. According to the urban legend, Jagatpal Singh was cursed by Thakur Vishwanath Shahi before he was hanged, causing his fort to be destroyed by thunder and leaving him penniless. Snakes and insects will make their perch in his fort. There might be evidence of his curse's effects. The location of their hanging was given the name "Shaheed Chauk" by the government, although it is now also known as "Deshdrohi ka Ghar." Additionally, a district school bearing the name Thakur Vishwanath Shahdev been opened (Tudu, pp. 75-76).



CONCLUSION

Our definition of campus lore will overlap with the bits of campus history if the subject is a campus with a history spanning more than a century. In this instance, the relationship between the campus's true past and its stated or documented history is more nuanced. Put briefly, every bit of campus lore—regardless of its genuine historical significance—cannot be removed from people's impression of the institution. Although the culture of this campus is significantly distinct from the culture of the general population, we cannot discount the truth of the campus folklore. It's because it helps everyone create a group identity and gives many peoples social identity.

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