



Representation of Cultural Identity in Harishankar Jaladas' *Sons of the Sea*

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Abstract

Simply speaking, culture is the shared customs, ideas, beliefs, etc. of a particular group of people in a society or country. In his novel *Jalaputra*, which is translated into English as *Sons of the Sea*, Harishankar Jaladas describes about several rituals, Monosha Puja, gods and goddesses of fishermen, their prayers and recitation of manuscript etc. The fishermen of North Patenga lead their lives depending upon the mercy of the sea and they are also dependent on the moneylenders. They can never get release from the oppression of the moneylenders. Despite their misfortunes and oppression, these hard-working fishermen too have their own cultures and rituals, hopes and desires, moments of well and woe, love and hatred that are very much reflected in the novel. These fishermen are very aware of their cultural unity and identity. They have a strong respect for their own institutions and a firm belief in the rightness of their ideals. A strong bond of kinship and cooperation is also discernible among them. Fishermen also have their folklore, songs and stories. During their fishing work, they derive mental pleasure by singing folksongs on themes of everyday life. This paper will explore their rituals, customs and cultural elements that constitute them as separate entities. It will also discover several religious rituals and festivities which are the main magnetisms of this particular fishing community.

Keywords: Culture, Fishermen, Ritual, Cultural Identity, Harishankar Jaladas.