

CHANGING TRADITIONAL CHAMBA MINJAR FAIR

Pallavi Gautam

MA Sociology (HPU Shimla)

Pallavigautam997@gmail.com

Paper Received On: 21 FEB 2022

Peer Reviewed On: 28 FEB 2022

Published On: 1 MAR 2022

Abstract

*MinjarMela is a main fair of Chamba's peoples. MinjarMela got the accreditation of International Fair and it is one of the famous fair in Himachal Pradesh. The fair is celebrated on the second day of the month of **Shravan** according to the Hindu calendar. This comes in last week of July and duration of the fair is 7 days. Minjar is a name of maize flower. The fair is organized when the young paddy and maize shoots emerge from the soil, thus to celebrate the harvesting season of maize, this fair is celebrated. In this fair people generally wear silk costumes and there is always a stalk of Minjar attached to it. From this research paper I can conclude that many people of Chamba city think that there're changes in traditional Minjar fair and some people think that there're no changes in Minjar fair. This study based on intensive field work conducted in Chamba district in the state of Himachal Pradesh. During the months of February 2017 to march 2017. In this paper people saw that the changes in traditional Minjar fair like traditional festive songs replace with Bollywood or Punjabi songs, traditional fair converts into international and modern fair. This assignment didn't against the changing patterns of Minjar fair, my main intension to just show how the Minjar fair of Chamba district changes traditional to international.*

Keywords: - Traditional rites and rituals, Chamba's people, Culture of Chamba, Kunjari Malhar, International Minjar fair.



Scholarly Research Journal's is licensed Based on a work at www.srjis.com



Chapter 1

1.1 History of Minjar

A fair commencing from the last Sunday of July, lasting for seven days, namely the Minjar Fair is

a splendid carnival held in Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh.

Known to be a real fun fiesta, the fair comes as a welcome break to the locals and tourists both who throng the region during the fair. Celebrated with a marked enthusiasm, the fair comes as a cultural binding force as it totally rejuvenates the ethnic spirit of the people of this region.

The Minjar Fair is held in Himachal Pradesh with great pomp and fanfare. Tourists throng the Chamba region at Himachal Pradesh during the Minjar Fair. It is a fiesta that brings into notice the rich cultural heritage of India. Numerous legends are associated with the Minjar Fair in Himachal Pradesh.

The Chamba Town in Himachal Pradesh has gained eminence because of this fair. The River Ravi used to flow in between the Champawati Temple and Hari Rai Temple. The people who visited any one of these two temples had to cross the river Ravi to go to the other. So, the Raja of Himachal Pradesh, asked a saint to make Hari Rai Temple accessible to everyone.

The saint in turn ordered the Raja and his subjects to assemble at the Champawati Temple. There a yagya or fire sacrifice was conducted for seven days. The Brahmins who were invited from Benaras prepared a cord of various colors known as Minjar.

After the yagya was over, miraculously, the Rive Ravi changed its course and people could then easily visit the temple of Hari Rai. The name Minjar emerged from the cord spun by the Brahman.

According to another legend, the Minjar Temple derives its name from the tale of the old woman who wished to meet the king of Chamba but she was so poor that she could not bring a nice gift for the king.

But she brought a Maize Flower called Minjar for the benevolent king and from here the name Minjar Fair emerged. The king was so delighted with the old woman that he declared that day to be feted as Minjar Fair.

Description of the Minjar Fair:

In the Minjar Fair people generally wear silk costumes and there is always a stalk of Minjar attached to it. They offer their prayers to the Laxmi Narayan Temple and celebrate throughout the week. The stalk of Maize symbolizes their faith in God and also indicates their expectation of a good harvest.

During the Minjar Fair, sweets, fruits and money are sent to friends and relatives. The immersion ceremony follows the Puja. This is marked by a grand procession.

In this impressive procession the **RaghuvirVerman** idol along with other gods and goddesses are taken in Palanquins for immersion in the river. As a mark of reminiscence, a flag, known as Shahi Flag, is taken back home.

Time for the celebration of Minjar Fair:

From the last Sunday of July, the Minjar Fair commences. It continues for seven days at a stretch and is a splendid carnival of Himachal Pradesh.

Changing pattern of Minjar Fair

The famous Minjar fair of Chamba valley, celebrated to commemorate the victory of the raja of Chamba over the ruler of Trigarta (Kangra) since 935 AD, carries with it a heritage cultural legacy, relished by the local population for centuries.



It symbolizes the pain of separation from loved ones and sacrifices of forefathers.

However, the present day Minjar has lost its sheen as folk art forms have been put into the cold storage by the onslaught of Punjabi pop and Bollywood music. As a result, folk artistes have become victims of diminishing avenues and lack of sources for sustenance.

The fair has been reduced to organization of money minting games during cultural nights, making Minjar an alien event at least for the older generation who are still connected to the original legacy of the fair.

“Sanskritisankshak ab khatamho gaye, **kunjuchanchlo** ab punjabi ho gaye (the so-called custodians of culture have turned into crooks or shifted to popular Punjabi music),” a heritage enthusiast remarked on the current situation. *Kunju* and *Chanchlo* are characters of a true love story, part of narrative musical tradition in Chamba.

The fair used to boast of unique styles of singing ‘*Kunjari-Malhar*’, ‘*Masadha folksongs*’, ‘*Enchali*’, ‘*Ghurei*’ and others. “Ironically these traditional folk songs are no more a regular feature in Minjar, except for

Kunjari- Malhar, which marks the beginning of the fair,” said a local folk singer on condition of anonymity.

What substantiates his contention is the fact that Himachali artists don't even earn 1% of the earnings of Rs 5-10 lakh per performance of Bollywood or Punjabi artists.



Apart from it, the famous Chaugan ground is always reserved for the popular forms at prime time.

Speaking against the discrimination only invites the organizer's wrath.

"Himachali artists will never be a profitable option for the brokers who play this money game in connivance with the organiser," said a local folk singer. The brokers earn a huge commission by favoring Bollywood or Punjabi artistes.

Chapter 2

2.1 Objective of the Study: -

"To understand the changing traditional pattern of Minjar Fair"

2.2 Study Area:-

The study of Changing Traditional Chamba Minjar Fair was held in Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh.

It is an ancient town in the state of the Himachal Pradesh, in Northern India.

2.3 Source of Data collection:-

Data are the important asset for any type of study and for policy formulation. In finding result and allocation of recourse data play important role. Data collection is depending upon the quality of questionnaire and researcher's communication skill as well presence of mind. So, we were collected both from primary and secondary sources

2.4 Methodology: -

The present study based on intensive field work conducted in Chamba district in the state of Himachal

Pradesh. During the month of February 2017 to march 2017

2.4.1 Interview: -

An interview is a conversation between two people (the interviewer and the interviewee) where questions are asked by the interviewer to obtain information from the interviewee. Interview is use as method for qualitative research. The qualitative research interview seeks to describe and the meanings of central themes in the life world of the subjects. The main task in interviewing is tounderstand the meaning of what the interviewees say.

2.4.2 Case study: -

A case study is an intensive analysis of an individual unit like a person, group, or event and givenstressing developmental factors in relation to research. The case study is common in social sciences They provide a systematic way of looking at events, collecting data, analyzing information, and reporting the results. Case studies should not be confused with qualitative research and they can be based on any mix of quantitative and qualitative evidence.

Chapter 3 Data analysis

Figure 1.1: - table showing Age Profile of the Respondent

Sr. No.	Age	No. of people	Percentage (%)
1	18-25	19	38.00
2	26-35	9	18.00
3	36-50	16	12.00
4	51 to above	6	12.00
Total		50	100.00

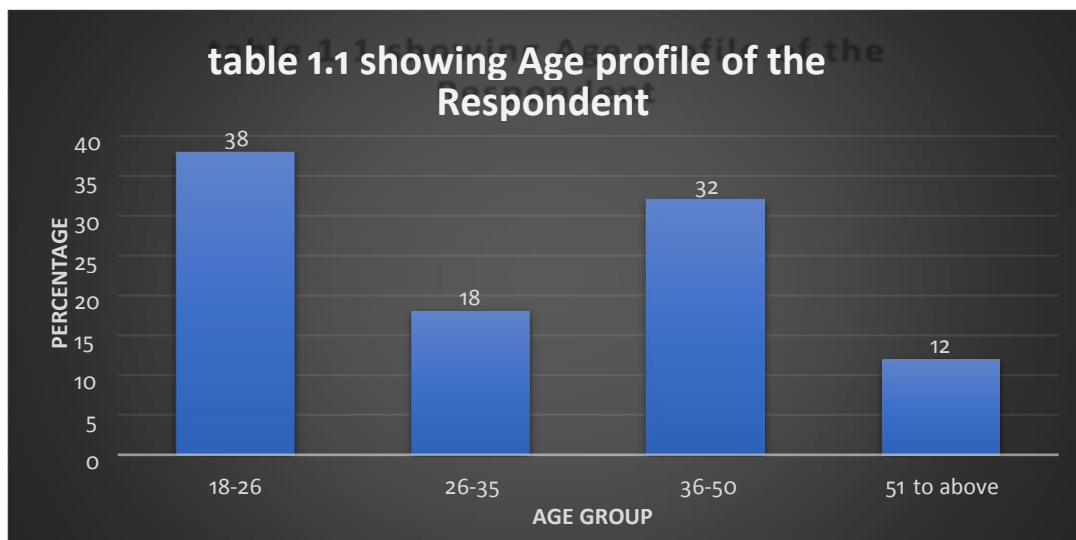
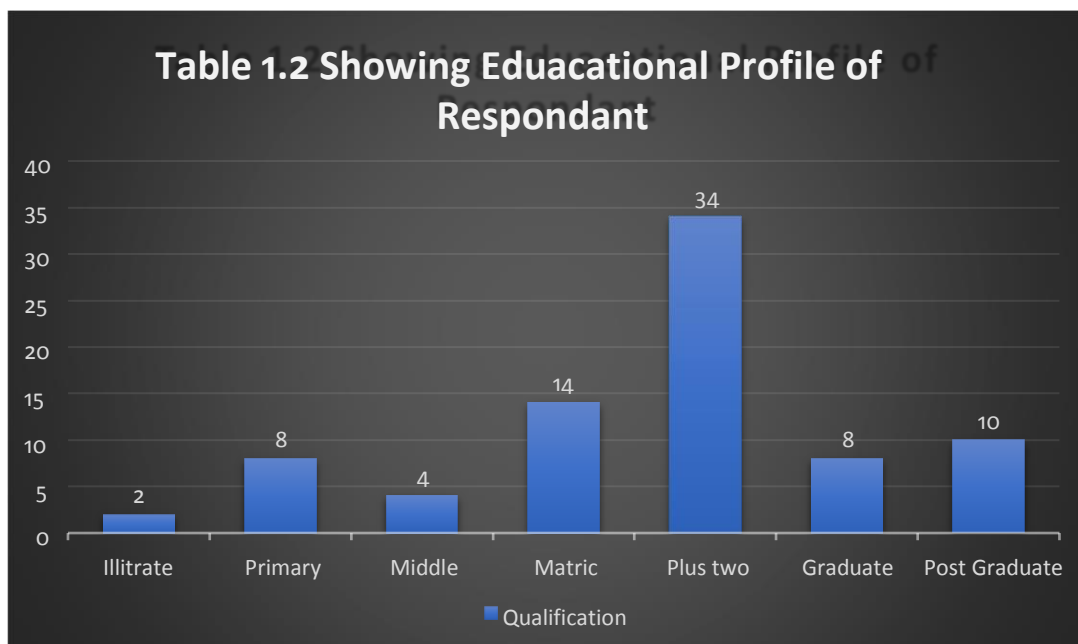


Figure 1.1 shows that 38% people lies between (18-25) age group and 18% of respondent are lies between (26-35) age group and left 22% people are lies between 36 to above.

Table 1.2: - table showing Educational Profile of the Respondent

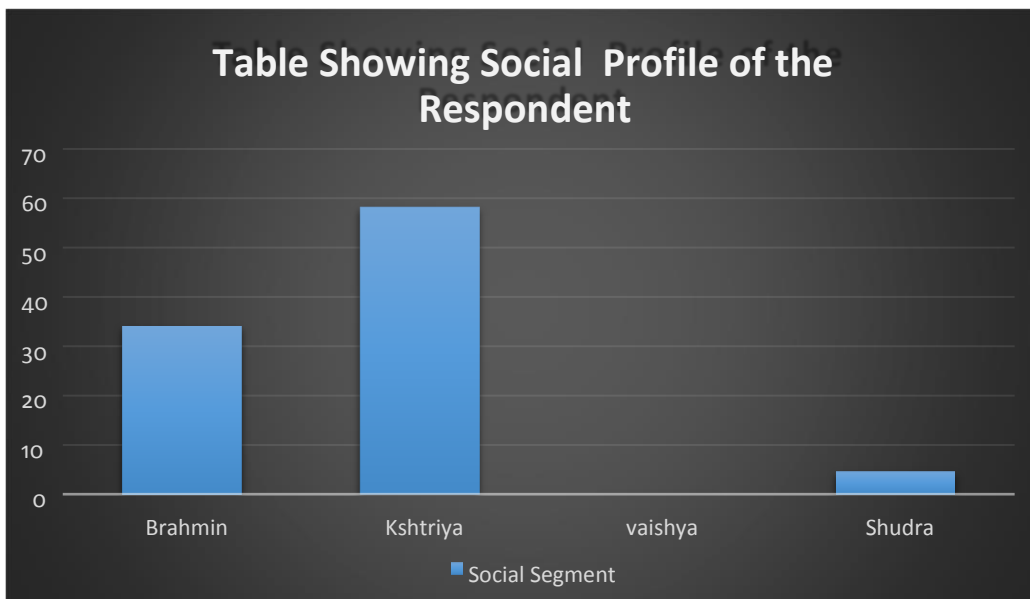
Sr. No.	Qualification	No. of the Respondent	Percentage (%)
1	Illiterate	1	02.00
2	Primary	4	08.00
3	Middle	2	04.00
4	Matric	7	14.00
5	+2	17	34.00
6	Graduate	4	08.00
7	Post Graduate	5	10.00
Total			100.00



According to survey of literacy rate of this region, the primary education is taken by 8% of the people. Only 4% are interested in having the middle Education, After the scale increased to 14% which moves to the matric. Further to the secondary Education 34% of the people are in the +2 Standard. Graduation and Post-Graduation are 28% people. And 10% people interested respectively. However, the percentage in decreased in the PG an in Graduation.

Table 1.3: - Table Showing the Social Profile of the Respondent

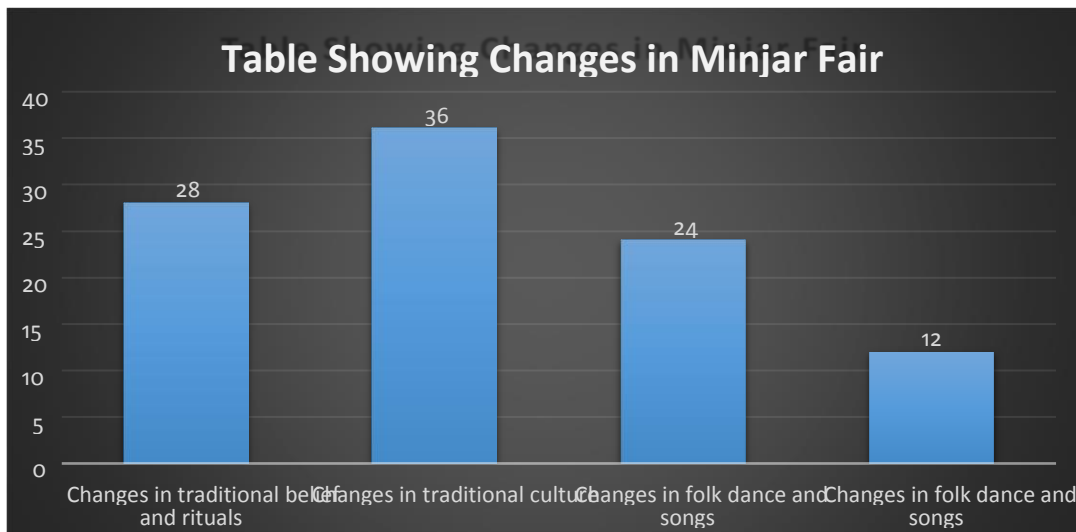
Sr. No.	Social Segment	No. of Respondent	Percentage (%)
1	Brahmin	17	34.00
2	Kshatriya	29	58.00
3	Vaishya	0	00.00
4	Shudra	4	08.00
Total		50	100.00



According to this survey 34% of the respondent are Brahmin, 58% of the people are Kshatriya Segment. and left 8% are Shudras.

Table 1.4: - Table showing Change in Minjar Fair

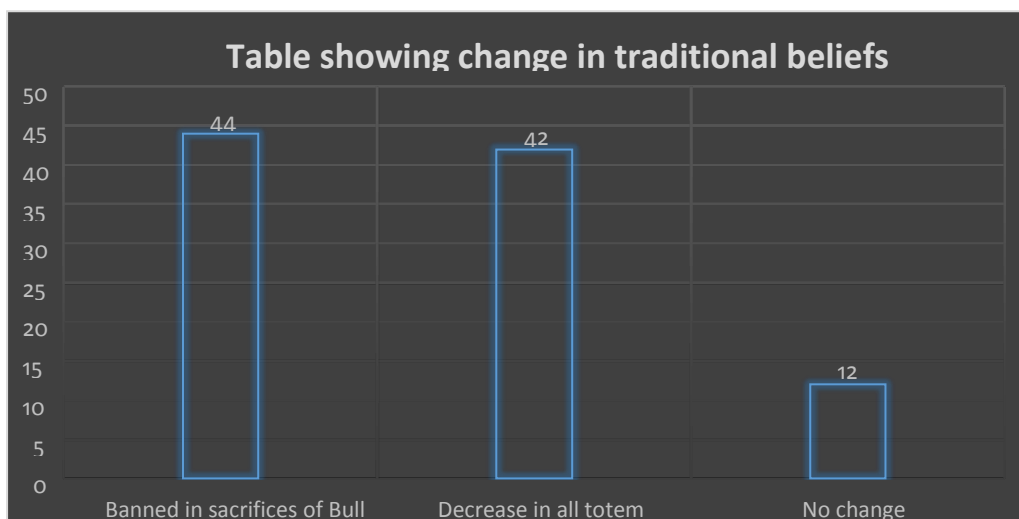
Sr. No.	Reasons	No. of Response	Percentage (%)
1	Changes in traditional belief and rituals	14	28.00
2	Changes in traditional culture	18	36.00
3	Changes in folk dance and songs	12	24.00
4	Changes in dressing style	6	12.00
Total		50	100.00



According to the survey 28% people think that changes in traditional beliefs and rituals are Cause of changes in Minjarmela, 36% of people think that changing in traditional culture is main cause. 24% of the people think that changes in folk song and dance are the main cause and left 12% of the people think that changes in traditional dressing style is the main cause of change in Minjarmela.

Table 1.5: - Table showing change in traditional beliefs

Sr. No.	Change in Beliefs	No. of Response	Percentage (%)
1	Banned in sacrifices of Bull	22	44.00
2	Decrease in all totem	21	42.00
3	No change	6	12.00
Total			100.00



According to the survey fig. 1.5 shows that 44% of people think that there is really change in ban in sacrifices of bull and 42% people think that there was decreased in all totems about Minjar fair and left 12% people think that there is no change in Minjar fair.

Table 1.6: - Table showing the people who are interested in International Minjar fair

Sr. No.	Response	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
1	Yes	45	90.00
2	No	5	10.00
total			100.00



According to this figure 90% people are interested in Minjar fair and left 10% people don't interested in international Minjar fair. They are like their old traditional Minjar fair.

Figure 1.7: - Table showing percentage of people who know about their major festive song

Sr. No.	Response	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
1	Yes	47	94.00
2	No	3	06.00
total			100.00

Table showing percentage of people who know about their major festive song

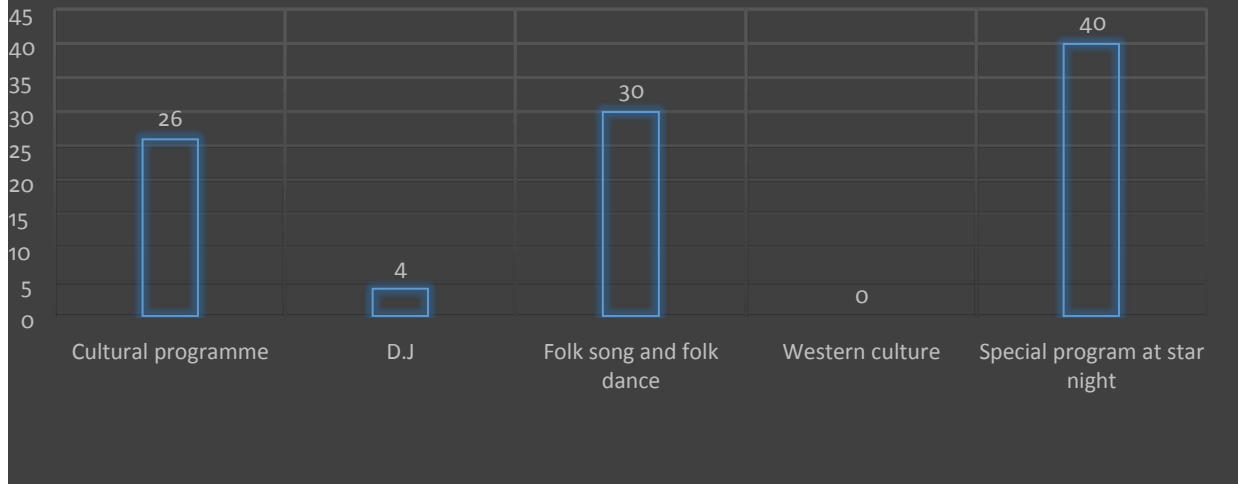


According to present study 94% of people think that they know about their major festive song and left 6% of people don't know about their major festive song.

Figure 1.8: - Table showing the percentage of people what types of performance they like the most at culture night

Sr. No.	Cultural night	No. of response	Percentage (%)
1	Cultural programme	13	26.00
2	D.J	2	04.00
3	Folk song and folk dance	15	30.00
4	Western culture	0	00.00
5	Special program at star night	20	40.00
total			100.00

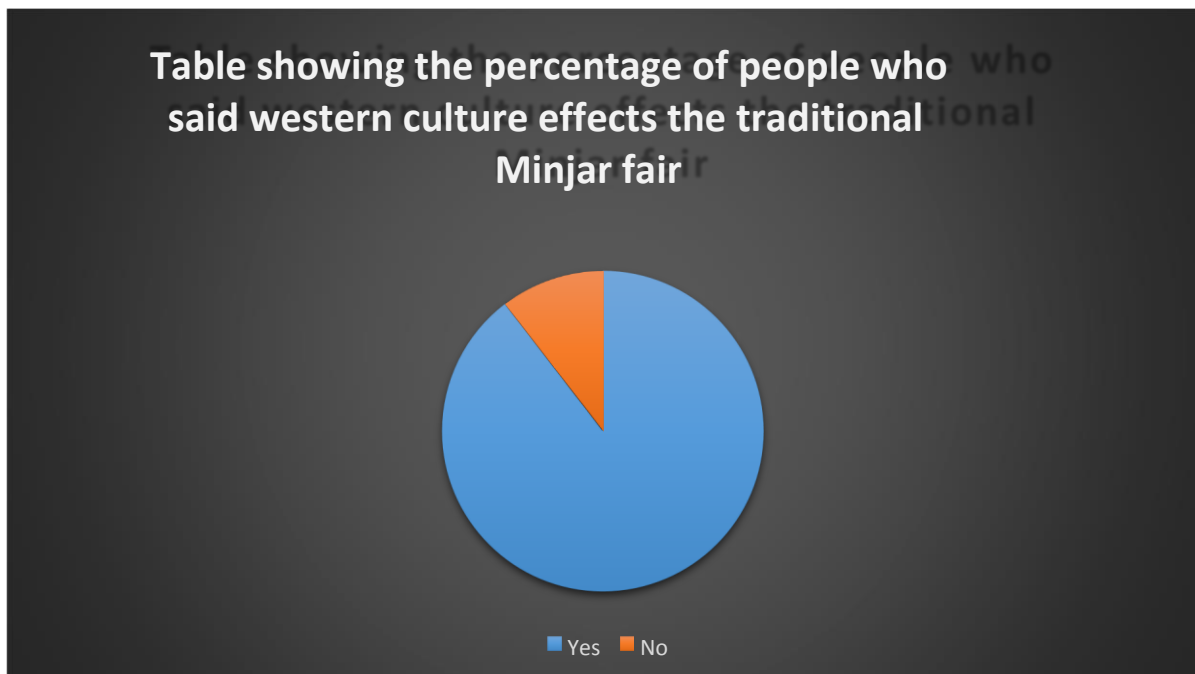
Table showing the percentage of people what types of performance they like the most at culture night



According to new data this figure shows that 26& people like cultural performance and 4% people like D.J. 30% people like folk culture and left 40% people like star performance at culture night.

Figure 1.9: - Table showing the percentage of people who said western culture effects the traditional Minjar fair

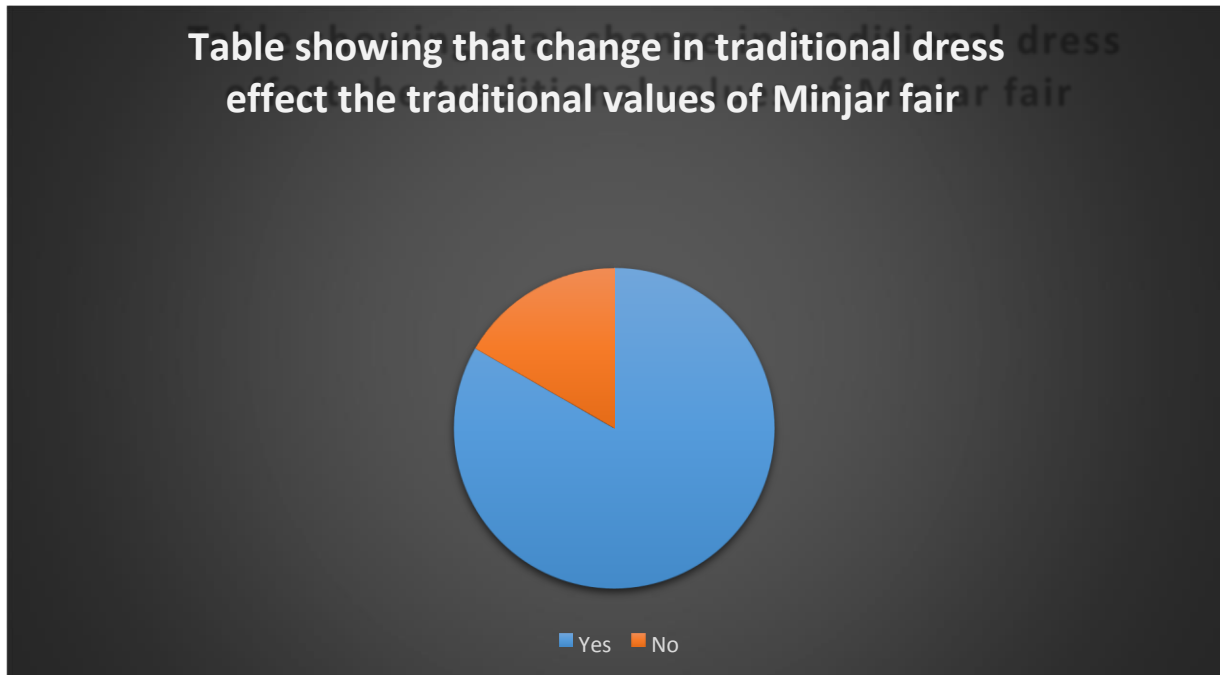
Sr. No.	Response	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
1	Yes	43	86.00
2	No	7	14.00
total			100.00



According to this survey this graph shows that 86% of people think that western culture effects the traditional Minjar fair and left 14% people think that the western culture doesn't affect the Minjar fair.

Figure 1.10: - Table showing that change in traditional dress effect the traditional values of Minjar fair

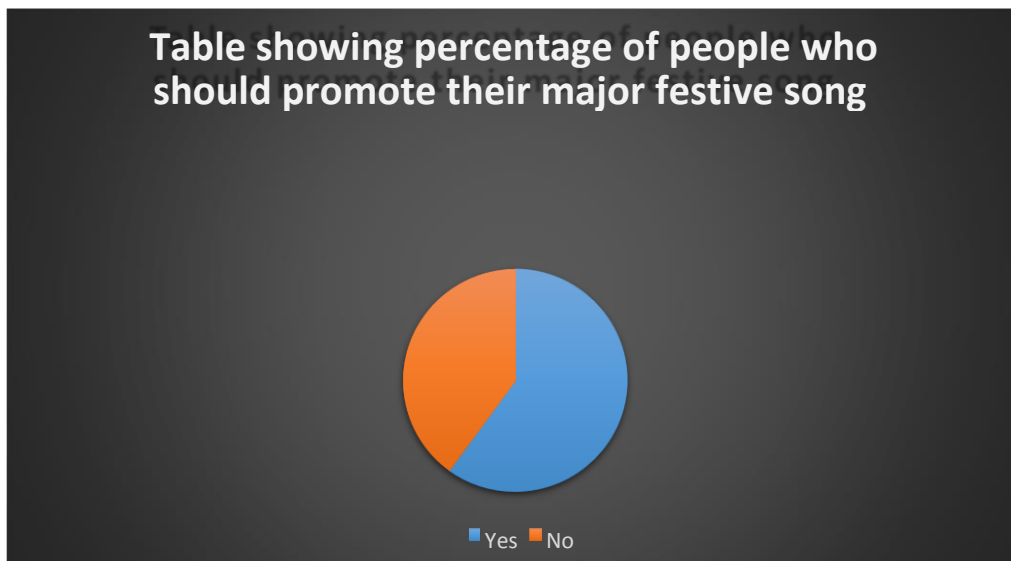
Sr. No.	Response	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
1	Yes	35	70.00
2	No	15	30.00
total			100.00



According to new data 70% of people think that change in traditional dress effect the traditional values of Minjar fair. And left 30% people think that change in traditional dress doesn't affect the Minjar fair.

Figure 1.11 Table showing percentage of people who want promote their major festive song

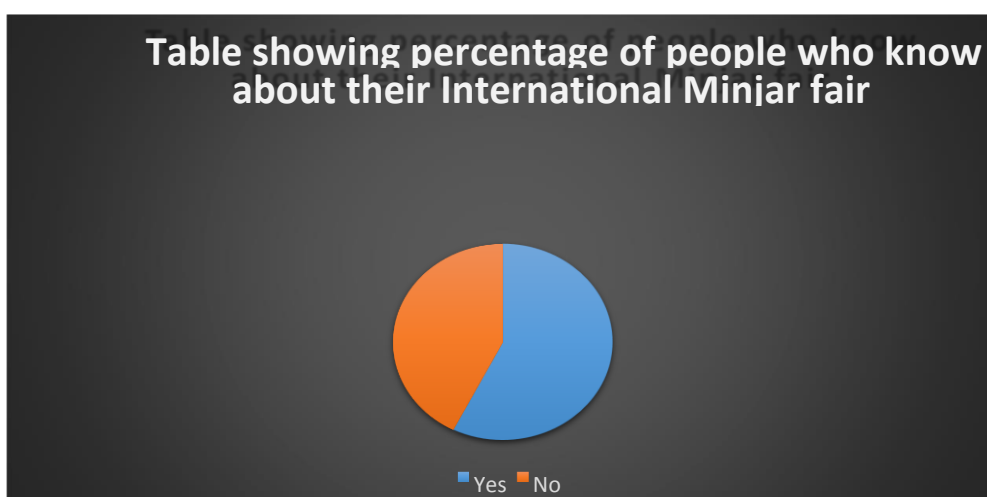
Sr. No.	Response	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
1	Yes	30	60.00
2	No	20	40.00
total			100.00



According to new data 60% of people think that Chambiyal have to promote their major festive song KunjariMalhar and 40% people think that chambiyal didn't want to promote their major festive song KunjariMalhar.

Figure 1.12 Table showing percentage of people who know about their International Minjar fair

Sr. No.	Response	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
1	Yes	27	54.00
2	No	23	46.00
total			100.00



This figure shows that 54% of people think that they know about their international Minjar fair, and rest 46% don't know about traditional Minjar fair.

Chapter 4

4.1 Conclusion

I can conclude that the famous Minjar fair of Chamba valley, celebrated to commemorate the victory of the raja of Chamba over the ruler of Trigarta (Kangra) since 935 AD, carries with it a heritage cultural legacy, relished by the local population for centuries. It symbolizes the pain of separation from loved ones and sacrifices of forefathers. However, the present day Minjar has lost its sheen as folk art forms have been put into the cold storage by the onslaught of Punjabi pop and Bollywood music. As a result, folk artistes have become victims of diminishing avenues and lack of sources for sustenance. The fair has been reduced to organization of money minting games during cultural nights, making Minjar an alien event at least for the older generation who are still connected to the original legacy of the fair.

“Sanskritisankshak ab khatamho gaye, kunjuchanchlo ab punjabi ho gaye (the so-called custodians of culture have turned into crooks or shifted to popular Punjabi music),” a heritage enthusiast remarked on the current situation. Kunju and Chachlo are characters of a true love story, part of narrative musical tradition in Chamba. The fair used to boast of unique styles of singing ‘Kunjari-Malhar’, ‘Masadha folksongs’, ‘Enchali’, ‘Ghurei’ and others. “Ironically these traditional folk songs are no more a regular feature in Minjar, except for Kunjari- Malhar, which marks the beginning of the fair,” said a local folk singer on condition of anonymity. What substantiates his contention is the fact that Himachali artists don’t even earn 1% of the earnings of Rs 5-10 lakh per performance of Bollywood or Punjabi artists.

From this research paper I can conclude that many people of Chamba city think that there is change in traditional Minjar fair and some people think that there is no changes in Minjar fair.

I also conclude that maximum people of Chamba city think that there is no need of major festive song **KunjariMalhar** at modern time.

Chamba’s people enjoy the star night at Minjar fair, they don’t want to like folk songs and dance at modern time.

I also see that maximum people of Chamba city don’t know about their traditional Minjar fair.

I also conclude that 70% of people think that change in traditional dress effect the traditional values of Minjar fair. And left 30% people think that change in traditional dress doesn’t affect the Minjar fair.

This survey this graph shows that 86% of people think that western culture effects the traditional Minjar fair and left 14% people think that the western culture doesn't affect the Minjar fair.

I also see that 44% of people think that there is change in ban in sacrifices of bull and 42% people think that there was decreased in all totems about Minjar fair and left 12% people think that there is no change in Minjar fair.

4.2 Web References

<https://hpchamba.nic.in>

<https://en.m.wikipedia.org>

<https://www.tourmyindia.com>

<https://m.hindustantimes.com>