Anthropological Investigation of Palm Usage in Manoujan People Life
(With emphasis on economic, social and cultural aspects)

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ABSTRACT: This thesis is titled "anthropological analysis of palm usage in Manoujan People Life with emphasis on cultural, social and economic aspects” and aims to delve into this social phenomenon from anthropological viewpoint. In this research, the author studies and observes facts and "describes" and analyzes the facts and moves from "description" to "explanation" of the phenomenon. Considering the research subject, the main research methodology is field study and complimentary research method was historical and documented (library) . Results showed that besides economic aspects, palm tree has a specific place in people's beliefs and this shows of this tree in Manoujan folklore. Giving palm tree as a gift, offering palm to Imams, asking for patients remedy and offering date for dead people are customs which have roots in old beliefs of Manoujan people and it also symbolizes resistance and strength in this city.

Keywords: Anthropology, Palm Usage, Economic, Social and Cultural Aspects

INTRODUCTION

Anthropology is a science which deals with different aspects of humanities. There is difference between ethnography and anthropology in terms of target and methodology. Palm tree is a strange creature of God and all its parts are useful for human. This tree has a lot of material and spiritual impacts on Manoujan people lives and besides source of income, it is the base of many special beliefs in this city. Therefore, recognition of palm structure and its uses and also beliefs concerning this tree is of great importance because such studies can contribute to understanding of material and non-material cultural aspects.

Statement of problem

Palm tree is the oldest plant on earth. This tree has a history about 7 thousand years and its emergence is attributed to the second geological era i.e. Triassic and Jurassic era. Palm fruit (date) has had an important role in employment and life of people in the distant past .

Palm name has been mentioned in many religious books and Buddha prayers. Further, Babylonians called palm tree as Keshmarou and Sumerians called it as "Detleh". In Quran, date
and palm names have been mentioned more than 20 times and this indicates the importance of date from Islam and Quran viewpoint. Date is one of the most familiar edibles in the past centuries. Willson, an expert in date study, believes that the main hometown of date is Iraq and western and southern region of Iran.

Date production capacity would not be equal to what we have at present if human left palm tree in its natural form and palm tree could produce equal male and female clusters and few trees could reach appropriate height. Therefore, human learnt that benefits of palm tree can be increased if the number of trees per hectare is reduced, pollination is contributed and 95% of male trees are eliminated and sprout is strengthened.

Few plants have played important roles in human life like palm tree. We can dare say that if palm did not exist, human residence in dry and hot areas would be more difficult.

Date has been mentioned as a heavenly fruit in many religious narrations and palm tree has been mentioned in Quran several times. Ayets 11 and 68 of Surreh Rahman and Ayets 22 and 24 in Maryam Surreh mention palm and date names. One palm tree acts like a working child of a household. In the past, date was used as food and its juice was used as a drink in date-producing countries. Transportation of date from one place to another has been rarely mentioned in the past while need for date has become global.

Investigation of the importance of palm tree in Manoujan City people life indicates culture and economy of this city and palm tree plays an important role in building traditional houses which is indicative of the local culture of this region. Further, such studies help agricultural organizations with scientific exploitation of date in date-rich areas.

Selection of appropriate theories concerning research subject

Evolutionism: evolution theory in anthropology was accompanied by definition of culture by "Thayler". After definition of culture, he continues to say: "based on general principles, spread of culture among different human communities is a subject for studying intellectual rules and human inventions". Similar cultural examples which are found in abundance in human civilization must be due to similar actions, and similar needs and if we see different degrees and levels of evolution, this may be attributed to historical stages of communities life and every community tries to play role in future culture and history transformation. The summary of evolutionists' theory concerning cultural evolution trend can be as follows:

1. An investigation of social and cultural works of the past generations reveals that all communities (even those which had famous and vast civilizations) had had some stages before reaching civilization.
2. Similarities in techniques and beliefs of different societies show "human spiritual unity" in the trend of thought and invention.
3. A comparison of societies reveals that the trend of evolution of human culture and civilization in every society is a chain of techniques and beliefs which are moving in a gradual line of events.
4. Differences in societies which are spread all over the world indicate different stages and degrees in culture and civilization trend and they can be classified by comparison.

Structure of palm tree

Palm tree is a tall thin tree and its leaves and branches grow at top and its trunk does not have any leaf and branch. Its leaves and branches are very thin and curved outwards. sprouts at the root of palm tree are used for reproduction and palm tree absorbs minerals and water from underground. Further, date clusters grow inside palm branches and produce date. This tree has different types and each has a different name. of course, they do not have any apparent difference and their fruits are different.

Importance and place of palm tree in Manoujan

The importance of palm tree in social, economic and cultural lives of Manoujan people is obvious and economy of many people in this city depends on Palm trees. Further, a large part of
Manoujan farmers' income is obtained by palm fruit. Furthermore, the number of palm trees a person has indicates his or her social status because he or she obtains more income from palm tree. Moreover, palm tree plays an important role in customs, beliefs and cultural aspects. One of the reasons for importance of palm tree is special climatic conditions of the region for growing palm tree as it was mentioned, palm tree has many properties and is a cost-effective tree and all its parts can be used. There is an Arabic saying in this case: palm tree properties are as many as days of a year. Leaves and branches of palm tree are used for making basket, mat, wooden houses and tents and other handicrafts and contribute to household economy.

All parts of this tree have usages. Even its seed has industrial application. This small seed is used for treating diabetes patients and in pharmaceutical industries. It is also used for preparation of flour for using in livestock food. As it was mentioned before, this tree plays role in different aspects of life like economy, nutrition and so on. As it was mentioned before, this tree is used if building temporary houses which contribute to household economy and reduces costs. Low-income households used palm leaves to build temporary houses to protect their assets and lives and because of expensiveness of building materials, low-income households are benefited from this tree a lot.

**Functions of palm in Manoujan**

Palm tree has an antiquity equal to the city history and growing palm tree has been common in Manoujan due to favorable climatic conditions.

Mnaoujan people use all parts of palm tree and all its parts are important and useful. Leaves, branches and fruit of palm tree can be used in different forms and have different functions.

**Palm tree in Manoujan folklore**

Besides other functions of palm in Manoujan people lives, this tree has a lot of impacts on other aspects of people's lives. All parts of Palm tree are used in all dimensions of life and there are different customs concerning palm tree. Moreover, palm tree has been very important in local songs and poems.

Various uses of palm tree have given a considerable importance to palm for Manoujan people. Special uses of palm indicate the important role of this tree in residents' lives.

Manoujan people consider palm tree as sacred due to use of Imam Ali name beside palm tree name and respect it in special manner. They believe that palm is the remainder of Adam's Mud and has come from heaven and has been grown by Imam Ali's hands.

Manoujan people use palm to give it as bride's alimony, present to babies, offer to ask for patient's cure and so on because they consider palm as sacred and having benefits for people. Furthermore, this tree has many applications in sayings and poems and songs. Negative and positive ethical characteristics are mentioned by using palm and its parts names. Features like tall height, laziness, gossip, gluttony, resemblance of children to parents, avarice and so on are stated by one of the elements of palm tree.

The energy produced by date, sense of hatred at winter due to absence of date and sense of interest in summer due to date abundance and achieving income can be observed in poems.

Special beliefs of Manoujan people concerning palm tree are interesting. Beliefs like bad luck of felling palm tree, taking oath on date being sweet, the fact that date has come from heaven, offering to dead people, use of palm wood while burying a dead person and ... are all symbols of sanctity of palm tree in Manoujan.

Undoubtedly, any study follows some targets. The following questions are investigated in the present research:

- How is the evolution trend of use of palm tree in Manoujan?
- When was palm tree taken to Manoujan first?
- What are the structural elements of palm tree?
- What are the functions of palm tree in Manoujan?
- What is the place of palm tree in folklore and beliefs of Manoujan people?

**Research methodology**

In this research, the author studied and observed some facts and "describes" and analyzes the facts to move from "description" to "explanation" of the phenomenon.
Considering research subject, the main method is field study and complimentary method is historical and documented (library) study. The main technique for data collection is observation, interview and taking notes and reference to documents and books was used as a complementary technique for data collection. The present research is considered as a sectional study.

Statistical population, sample and sampling method

Statistical population of the research was Kerman Province and research place was Manoujan city which is located in south of Kerman province, Iran. Multistage cluster sampling method was used for sampling in the time period 2001-2011.

How is the evolution trend of use of palm tree in Manoujan?
Palm tree has been an inseparable part of Manoujan people lives and farming had been very common before industrialization and technology advancements in this area and date has been the main product of this region.

Due to abundant precipitation and adequate water for farming, wide areas of this city was formerly covered with palm tree and date has been very important in comparison with other products and those who had had great palm orchards received a lot of respect. Therefore, farming and especially growing palms has been very common in the past.

Evolution trend of palm tree growing in Manoujan can be summarized as follows: in the past, irrigation took place by means of irrigation by subterranean water. Gradually, traditional irrigation and planting techniques like use of plough for plowing farmlands were replaced by new technologies like tractor and diesel motors and electrical motors.

Furthermore, drip irrigation and other new methods are used instead of flooding and other traditional irrigation methods due to shortage in underground water reserves.

In the past, household members collected crops, then separated dates and packed them in dishes made up of palm leaves and took the packages to other areas by horses and donkeys and camels. Today, however, seasonal workers are used for collecting dates. They separate dates in date packaging units and pack them in small and large packages and take them to city for sales.

When was palm tree taken to Manoujan first?
Although this tree is native to the area, it seems it has brought from Arabic countries. Palm cultivation is believed to be attributed to Sasanian period and the reason for this is engraving of palm tree in ancient inscription and being mentioned in old books. However, Arabs attack to Iran can be also a reason for cultivation of this tree in southern Iranian regions due to desirable climatic conditions for growing palm tree.

What are the structural elements of palm tree?
Palm tree is both cultivated by seed and by small saplings called sprout. However, sprout method is better because seed method may end up in fruitless tree. Trunk of palm tree is made up of fibers called Sees. Palm leaves which are grown in the top of the tree is called Peesh.

Spot or the very male cluster which is locally called Cuger grows among leaves of male tree and is used for pollination in late Esfand.

What are the functions of palm tree in Manoujan?
As it was mentioned, Palm tree has many functions which can be summarized as follows:
- Palm branches: branches of palm tree are used for making different things like date-carrying baskets, fan, hat, mat, shade and so on.
- Date functions in food: palm fruit (=date) is used in making different foods like date juice, Halvah, date-oil, Changal or Changamal (a local food) and so on.
- Seed and trunk function: in the past, date seed was used for making rosary and necklace and bracelet and used as ornament. However, this is less common at present. Date seed is used nowadays in pharmaceutical and livestock feed. Palm trunk used to be used as house pillar and bridge.

What is the place of palm tree in folklore and beliefs of Manoujan people?
Besides other functions of palm tree in Manoujan people lives, this tree has a lot of impacts on culture and there are special beliefs surrounding this tree.

Giving palm tree as a present to children and brides and poor people is a symbol of grace and good luck. Offering date to dead people and putting palm wood under dead person's shoulders is a sign of special importance of palm tree for Manoujan people and also other Iranian cities.

All these special beliefs make it justifiable for even the poorest people to plant a palm tree in their yards to symbolize financial success.

**Conclusion and discussion**
Palm tree has always been important among Manoujan people. Palm tree is important for several reasons:
- Special climatic conditions of the region which makes it possible to grow palm tree.
- Structure of palm tree which has special features in comparison with other trees and has many functions for human.

Palm tree structure is such that it has a high adaptability power in surroundings. It is very hardy against natural threats. Therefore, palm tree parts have special functions for Manoujan people. Palm tree can tolerate thirst and its features have many functions for Manoujan people.\(^{10}\)

In Manoujan, different types of date include: Halili, Mordasang, Mazafati, Karouteh, Khanizi, and Abdandan. The most frequent items are Mazafati and Mordasang. Its leaves are used in handicrafts like sweep, Parand, Parig, Savand, tent and palm fruit (date) is used in many foods: Halvah, Date-oil, date juice and so on. In addition to economic benefits of palm tree, it has a special place in Manoujan folklore and this indicates sanctity of palm tree. Offering palm tree as a present, offering to Imams, offering for patients’ cure and offering to dead people are customs which have roots in old beliefs and palm tree symbolizes resistance and strength.

**REFERENCES**