



## **Socio-economic Impacts of Identity Recognition on the Kharwar Community in Ballia District**

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### **Abstract:**

This study explores the socio-economic identity of the Kharwar tribe in Eastern Uttar Pradesh, specifically in the Ballia district. Although the Kharwar are officially recognized as a Scheduled Tribe (ST) in different Indian states, including parts of Uttar Pradesh, many community members in Ballia continue to struggle with major obstacles to acquiring official registration and tribal certification. The lack of correct documents severely restricts their access to education, government jobs, and social programs. The study aims to investigate the community's historical and cultural history, as well as the impact of a lack of official identity documents on their socioeconomic status. Data were collected using a mixed-methods strategy that included purposive, random, and snowball sampling methods. Fifty houses in the Nagra block took part in in-depth interviews that established a set schedule. To develop a deeper understanding of the community's systemic neglect and socioeconomic challenges, the study also examines historical documents and secondary materials like novels, government reports, academic publications, and research papers.



The outcomes show that the Kharwar group still faces administrative challenges when seeking to get tribal certificates, despite constitutional provisions and legal systems designed to protect tribal rights. Their socioeconomic disadvantages persist, and their cultural identities are jeopardized as a result of the government's inaction. The study emphasized the Kharwar people's persistence, as well as the urgent need for institutional support and recognition. This report suggests policy changes and inclusive actions to protect the rights and dignity of the Kharwar tribe in Uttar Pradesh, outlining their ongoing struggles.

**Keywords:** Kharwar community, lack of documentation, socio-economic, Identity Recognition.

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### **Introduction:**

India is known for its diverse social, economic, occupational, and cultural practices, heavily influenced by regional and environmental factors. Among its various communities, some are known as "Tribe." These are indigenous social groups distinguished by their own unique socio-economic structures, culture, traditions, beliefs, sense of belonging, and sense of accountability.

In India, tribal people live in naturally remote areas and on forest hills. They are referred to by a variety of names, including "the people of the forest and hill" or "the original inhabitants," according to Vidyarthi and Rai. Among the common terms are Anusuchit Janjati (scheduled tribes), Adimjati (primitive people), Pahari (hill dwellers), Vanyajati (forest castes), and Vanvasi (forest occupants). The most well-known of these terms is Adivasi, and the constitutional phrase that encompasses all of them is Anusuchit Janjāti Scheduled tribe." (Rai, 1976).

The word "scheduled tribe," as defined in Article 342 of the Indian Constitution, is critical for recognizing and protecting the rights of Scheduled Tribes (STs) throughout India. It is found in Part XVI and grants the President the authority to designate certain tribes or tribal communities as Scheduled Tribes in relation to a specific State or Union Territory.



According to Vidyarthi, “Tribe is a social group having a definite territory, common name, common district, common culture, and the behavior of an endogamous group, common taboos, and existence of the specific social and political system, complete confidence in leaders and self-reliance in their separate economy”. (Vidyarthi, 1978).

A general image of half-naked people with arrows and spears in their hands, feathers on their heads, and incomprehensible language frequently accompanied by cannibalism and savage tales comes to mind when one hears the word "tribe" or "tribal." Their lives are portrayed as cruel, harsh, and brief, and they are described as savage, animistic, uncivilized, or headhunters. Their religion is a hodgepodge of superstitions, their art is vulgar, and they have unattractive, dark-skinned, wild, and sickly faces (Guha, 2010)

However, over time, many tribes have faced challenges in maintaining their distinct identities. Communities such as the Gond and Kharwar have experienced significant cultural erosion and socio-economic marginalization. Historically, Kharwar communities were classified under the Scheduled Castes (SC) category in Uttar Pradesh. Recognizing the need to acknowledge their unique tribal characteristics, the Government of India, through the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Orders (Amendment) Act of 2002, reclassified these communities as Scheduled Tribes in specific districts. For the Kharwar community, this reclassification was implemented in districts including Ballia, Deoria, Ghazipur, Varanasi, and Sonbhadra. (Vajpayee, April-June,2017)

Despite this official recognition, many members of the Kharwar community in Ballia district continue to face significant challenges in securing tribal certification, which is essential for accessing various government benefits and welfare schemes. The lack of proper documentation not only hinders their socio-economic development but also poses a threat to the preservation of their cultural identity. ( Rai, R. 2016).

### **Aims and Objectives**



- To investigate the Socio-Economic Challenges Affecting the Kharwar Community's Identity in Ballia District.
- To analyze the Impact of Tribal Certificate Issues on Access to Government Schemes and Opportunities.

### **Research Methodology**

A progressive parallel mixed-methods design was used in this study. Both qualitative and quantitative information were gathered and analyzed together for this study. To provide a more comprehensive picture of the socio-economic realities of the Kharwar community, this approach aimed to integrate findings by allowing the subjective data, such as lived experiences and contextual information, to be added to and enhanced by the quantitative information, such as statistical trends.

The study took place in Uttar Pradesh's Ballia district. Fieldwork focused on the Nagra block, which turned out to have a large Kharwar population.

A multiple-stage sampling approach was used to select participants:

1. Purposive Sampling: The Nagra block was specifically chosen to ensure that the study focused on an area with a high concentration of the target community.
2. Snowball Sampling: Within the Nagra block, the initial key informants were established to assist in finding and getting to Kharwar households. This method was essential to understanding the community and establishing trust.
3. Random Sampling: To reduce selection bias, a final selection of villages and households was done from the produced list of households using simple random sampling.

Final sample: The study included 10 villages: Rupwar, Rampur, Dekhvari, Deoria, Khari, Siswar, Birpura, Lahasani, Dihawa, and Gothwa. Five households were randomly selected from each hamlet, yielding a total sample size of 50 families for primary data collection.



1. **Primary Data: In-Depth Household Interviews:** Data was collected using a structured interview schedule with the heads of 50 selected families. The schedule included both closed-ended questions (for quantitative analysis) and open-ended questions (to collect qualitative insights) about several socio-economic indicators such as income, education, scholarship, occupation, health, property ownership, and access to government programs.
2. **Secondary Data:** Secondary data was gathered to help contextualize the main results within a larger historical and systemic framework. This includes historical records and ethnographic observations from the Kharwar community.
  - Sources include government reports, census statistics, and applicable departmental policies.
  - References include academic articles, journals, and earlier research papers on related themes.

## Result and Findings

- **Quantitative Data Analysis:** Information gathered from the interview schedule's closed-ended questions was coded and imported into IBM SPSS Statistics 25 for analysis. The socio-economic characteristics of the respondents were summarized by the computation of descriptive statistics, which included means, standard deviations, percentages, and frequencies. Histograms, tables, pie charts, and bar charts were used to show the results.
- **Qualitative Data Analysis:** Thematic analysis was used to examine interview notes and open-ended question responses. In order to give the quantitative data more depth and significance, this required transcribing the responses, finding recurrent themes and patterns, and interpreting them.

## Triangulation

During the analysis stage, the quantitative and qualitative results were merged. The themes that emerged from the qualitative narratives and other sources were compared with the



tendencies found in the statistical data. By offering convergent information about the socio-economic difficulties the community faces, this triangulation technique improved the validity and reliability of the study's findings.

Statistics		
TRIBAL CERTIFICATE		
N	Valid	348
	Missing	0

### Tribal Certificate

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	57	16.4	16.4	16.4
2	291	83.6	83.6	100.0
Total	348	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 shows tribal certificate holders and non-holders in the Kharwar community.

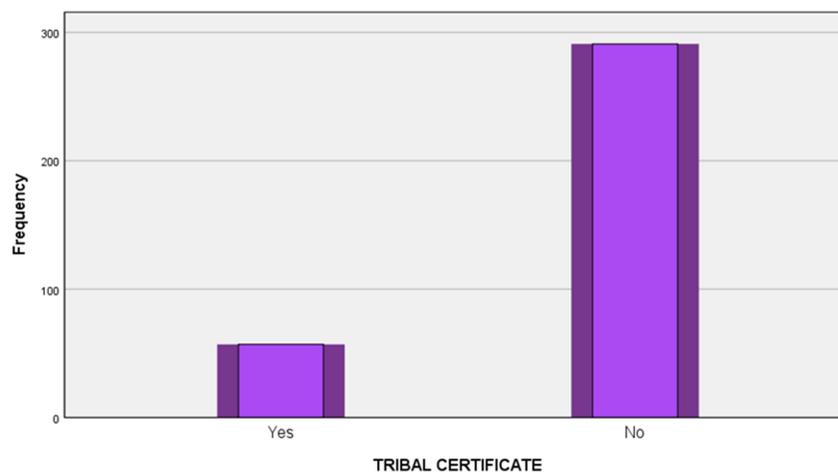


Figure 1: Tribal certificate of Kharwar



This table summarizes a yes/no question asked of 348 Kharwar people

**Code 1 (Yes):** 57 people (16.4%) have a tribal certificate.

**Code 2 (No):** 291 people (83.6%) do not have one.

The vast majority (over 83%) of the people in this group do not possess a tribal certificate, and due to this, they are unable to get scholarships and any Scheduled tribe reservation-related benefits.

Statistics		
SCHOLARSHIP EVER RECEIVED IN EDUCATION		
N	Valid	348
	Missing	0

SCHOLARSHIP EVER RECEIVED IN EDUCATION					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	274	78.7	78.7	78.7
	Yes	74	21.3	21.3	100.0
	Total	348	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 shows the scholarship received in Education.

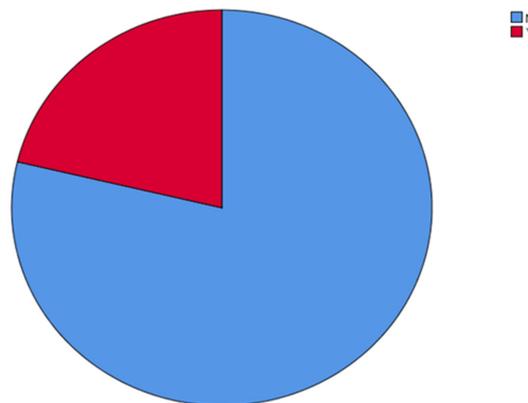


Figure 2: Pie chart showing Scholarship status in Kharwar students



The analysis reveals that access to educational scholarships is highly limited within the community. Out of 348 respondents, a large majority, 78.7% (N=274), reported never having received a scholarship for their education. Only 21.3% (N=74) confirmed having ever received such financial support.

### Marital Status

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Widow	9	2.6	2.6	2.6
Married	206	59.2	59.2	61.8
Unmarried	133	38.2	38.2	100.0
Total	348	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 shows the marital status of the Kharwar community.

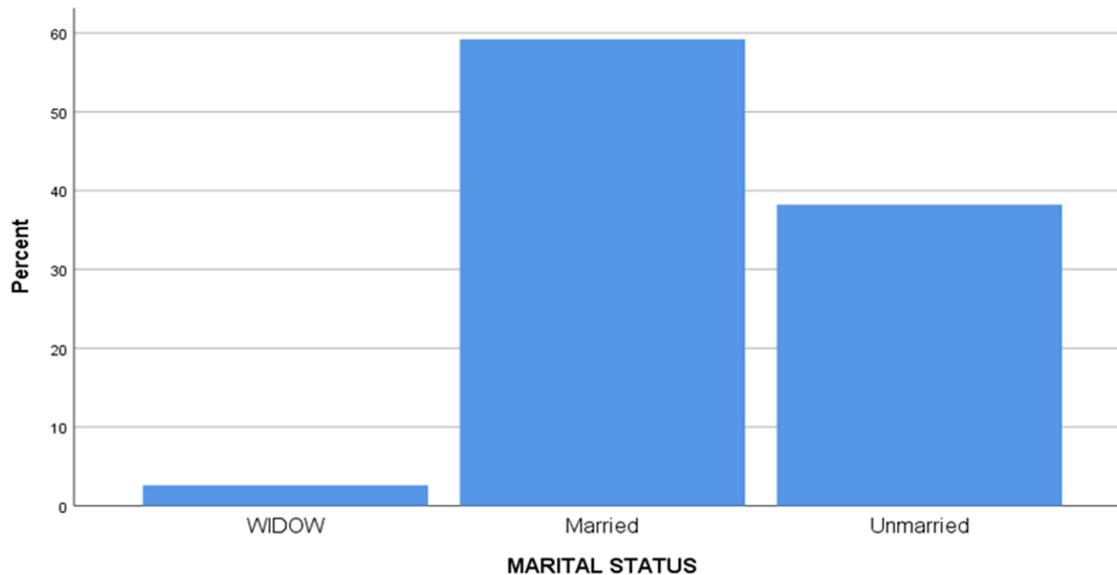


Figure 3: Shows the Marital status of Kharwar in Ballia.

Of 348 respondents with complete data, the marital status distribution is:

- Married: 206 people (59.2%) - the most common (modal) category.



- Unmarried: 133 people (38.2%).
- Widow: 9 people (2.6%).
- The vast majority of the Kharwar sampled population is married.

The Kharwar community of Ballia practices endogamous marriage and follows a single gotra — the ‘Kashyap’ gotra. They observe and perform the same rituals as the upper-caste communities, without any distinct or unique marriage rituals of their own.

As one respondent shared:

“Humre baba-dada bade logon ke ghar rahe kar, unke ghar kaam karte-karte unke yaha bole-chali se lekar jaise unka rahen-sehen tha, waise hi dhal gaye... Lekin aaj bhi humre jaat mein hum sirf apne hi gotra — jo ki ‘Kashyap’ gotra hai — ussi mein shaadi karte hain aur karte aa rahe hain.

Poore Ballia mein aapko sirf Kashyap hi gotra milega, aur wahi ek bas ab hai jo humari pehchaan ka madhyam bacha hua hai. Warna humre baba-parbaba dheere-dheere bade jaat ke logon ke saath rahte-rahte apna sab kuch chhod diye...”

*“Our forefathers lived and worked in the homes of upper-caste families. Over time, by constantly being around them, they adopted their language, way of speaking, and lifestyle. Slowly, our original identity began to blend in with theirs. But even today, within our community, one tradition has remained unbroken — we marry only within our own gotra, which is Kashyap.*

*In the entire Ballia region, you’ll only find people of the Kashyap gotra among us, and that has become the last remaining link to our true identity. Otherwise, our ancestors, having lived so long among the upper castes, would have eventually let go of everything that made them who they were.”*

This account highlights how the community’s close association with upper-caste households led to the gradual adoption of their ways of life. However, despite these cultural



shifts, strict adherence to endogamy within the Kashyap gotra remains a defining identity marker for the Kharwar of Ballia.

<b>Occupational Status</b>				
<b>Valid</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not yet</b>	12	3.4	3.4	3.4
<b>House maker</b>	96	27.6	27.6	31.0
<b>Private job</b>	62	17.8	17.8	48.9
<b>Government job</b>	27	7.8	7.8	56.6
<b>Skill job</b>	17	4.9	4.9	61.5
<b>Business</b>	11	3.2	3.2	64.7
<b>Farmer</b>	10	2.9	2.9	67.5
<b>Student</b>	113	32.5	32.5	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 4 shows the Occupational status of the Kharwar community

This data, gathered from 348 respondents, demonstrates a shift away from conventional employment in the Kharwar community. Students make up the largest category (113 responses, 32.5%), followed by housewives (96, 27.6%). Together, they make up 60.1% of the overall sample. Traditional work is less widespread, with private sector occupations (62, 17.8%) and government positions (27, 7.8%) accounting for smaller amounts. This shows a population that is primarily in an educational stage or engaged in home responsibilities.

Within the community, awareness about education and employment is gradually increasing. Although some individuals lack tribal certificates and are unable to access scholarships, many are still striving to obtain them. Those who are unable to do so often turn to private sector jobs after completing basic education. By the age of 18 or 19, many migrate to other states or cities in search of income, often prioritizing work over higher education.

As one respondent shared:



*“Padhai-likhai karke kya hi milega, jab hum sarkari naukri mein baith hi nahi sakte, jab humre sarkar jaat hi nahi banane de rahi hai...*

*Humare biraadri ke bahut log B.Ed., M.A. karke baithe hain aur koi fayda nahi hai. Aise accha hai ki main waha par company mein rehkar zindagi jeeta hoon, mahine ka 20,000 kamata hoon aur kharch karta hoon...*

*Sarkari naukri mein kuch bhi hai, sarkarein aayengi aur jaayengi, hum chote logon ka toh bas fayda uthaayengi...*

*Main aur mera bada bhai 17 ki umar se kama rahe hain Maharashtra mein, dono ka mila kar mahine mein 40,000 se 50,000 aata hai, aur humare ghar par bhi sab sukhi rehta hai...*

*Padh likh kar kya hi hoga, jab paisa hi na hoga to ..*

*Kaun pet palega humra aur humre baccho ka, dada baba kaise bhi kar k hum logo ko jiyaa diye aab humra time hai ghar parivar chal ne ka ... lekin haan hum log to naahi padhe lakiyaa logon k padhayge apne agar sab layak nikal gaye to varna apni hi tarha 8 pass karwa kr kehi kaam k liye bhejh dege jabarjasti padhai mein laga kar paise jayga hi aise hum se hum vo kuch to ghar ka kaam chalayega.. aur agar ladki hui to samaye se shadi biha kar k chutti pajayege ...*

*Ladkiyo ko log padha kar bhi kya hi kar rhe hai dher padh le rahi to ghar mein nahi rheti hai sab aur humre goan samaj mein ladkiya ghar mein hi rhene layak hai bahr k liye mard log hai eisliye padhai jayda jaruri nahi hai ... hum to kahege ki agar ladka 16 17 saal ka ho jaye to bahr ja kr kaam kare kehi na kehi kuch ghar mein laa kr debe karega..”*

*“What good is studying and getting educated, when we can't even get a government job because our government won't let our caste become one of those chosen ones? Many people from our community have done B.Ed., M.A., etc., and nothing has come of it. It's better that I work for a company, earn ₹20,000 a month, spend it, and live my life... In government jobs,*



*there's nothing for us—the governments will come and go, but people like us will only be taken advantage of.*

*My older brother and I have been working since we were about 17, in Maharashtra. Together we make ₹40,000–50,000 a month, and everything in my home is okay... What use is education if there's no money? Who will feed us, our children, our grandparents? Somehow, by any means, we'll live—but now is the time to look after the family, not just study.*

*But yes, we won't stop others from educating themselves – if someone is worthy, let them come through. Otherwise, it's better to let children finish up to 8th grade and send them out to work, rather than forcing them into higher studies that cost money and give nothing in return. That way, they'll do something, send money home. And if they are daughters, get them married at the right time so that they can rest in peace.*

*People say educating girls has no use. They study a lot, then don't stay in homes—our village community believes a girl is meant to live at home; outside work is for men. So there is no point in making them study too much. I say, once a boy is about 16–17 years old, let him go out and do any job—even a small one—so he can bring something home.”*

This narrative illustrates the growing disillusionment among many youth regarding the value of education in the absence of government support or assured employment. For many, immediate financial needs outweigh long-term educational goals. Still, it's important to note that 32% of the respondents are students, and many among them continue to aspire for a better future through education and hope for stable government jobs.

#### **Qualification \*Scholarship Ever Received In Education**

CASE VALID NUMBER	PERCENT	MISSING NUMBER	PERCENT	TOTAL NUMBER	PERCENT
348	100.0	0	0.0%	348	100.0%



QUALIFICATION		SCHOLARSHIP EVER RECEIVED IN EDUCATION		Total
		No	Yes	
Count	0	31	0	31
	1st	7	0	7
	2nd	3	0	3
	3rd	11	0	11
	4th	10	0	10
	5th	28	0	28
	6th	8	0	8
	7th	7	0	7
	8th	21	0	21
	9th	3	0	3
	10th	41	3	44
	11th	2	0	2
	12th	59	15	74
	B.A	23	38	61
	B.com	1	3	4
	B.Pharma	0	1	1
	G.N.M	0	2	2
	12+ ITI	6	0	6
	B.Ped	0	1	1
	B.Sc	0	2	2
	BLIS	0	1	1



	BDS	0	1	1
	B.ed	1	3	4
	U.K.G	2	0	2
	NURSARY	4	0	4
	L.K.G	4	0	4
	B.tech	1	1	2
	M.A	1	1	2
	P.hD+Net	0	2	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>348</b>

Table 5 shows the cross-tabulation of the qualification and scholarship in education.

Qualification	Qualification (Examples)	No Scholarship (No)	Received Scholarship (Yes)	Total	Scholarship Rate
School Level (Up to 10th)	0, 1st, 2nd,..., 10th	208	3	211	1.4%
Higher Secondary (11th-12th)	11th, 12th	61	15	76	19.7%
Undergraduate/Diploma	B.A	23	38	61	62.3%
Bachelor's Degree & Higher	B.com, B.Sc., B.Tech, M.A., etc.	4	18	22	81.8%
Total		274	74		

This distribution clearly shows that scholarships are an important facilitator of higher education (diploma, undergraduate, and postgraduate programs) in this population, rather than elementary or secondary education. According to diligence, incentives are most likely



distributed based on merit or in relation to specific courses of study. It is also critical to verify whether respondents excluded lower school-level stipends, which can be a source of information constraint.

## **Discussion**

1. It was found that the community did not have a tribe certificate, which is required to get government benefits and to comply with affirmative action legislation. 290 respondents, or 83.3% of the sample, out of 348 responses, lacked this certificate. In comparison, only 57 persons (16.4%) reported having one. This conclusion did not include one outlier response (.3%). This conspicuous lack of formal recognition highlights a fundamental barrier preventing the group from accessing socioeconomic strategies and efforts aimed at advancing their development.
2. Scholarships, a critical means of funding to encourage education among underprivileged communities, were found to be extremely limited. As demonstrated in Table 2, nearly four-fifths of the sample (78.7%, n=274) had never received a scholarship during their education. In contrast, only 74 people (21.3%) received this type of aid. This extreme discrepancy implies a serious failure in the outreach and distribution methods designed to help the community grow educationally.
3. Cultural Identity and Preservation, the struggle for official recognition has also impacted the cultural identity of the Kharwar community. The fear of cultural erosion due to assimilation pressures and a lack of institutional Support has caused a reluctance to share traditional practices. This isolation hinders cultural continuity and intergenerational knowledge transfer, threatening the preservation of their unique heritage.

## **Conclusion**

The findings regarding tribal certificate ownership highlight an important gap linked to awareness and access to documentation. As shown in Figure 1, 83.3% of the Kharwar



community members in the study do not possess an official tribal certificate. Field observations indicate that individuals who are relatively more aware, informed, or capable of navigating administrative procedures are able to obtain the certificate, whereas those with limited awareness or inadequate guidance often remain without it.

The lack of a tribal certificate restricts many eligible individuals from receiving scholarships, applying for reserved-category positions, or completing forms that require Scheduled Tribe documentation. In several cases, even local authorities face difficulty identifying whether a person belongs to the Kharwar Scheduled Tribe category because the community has, over time, integrated into the mainstream society to a great extent. During fieldwork, the researcher did not observe distinct tribal characteristics among the Kharwar community of Ballia, suggesting that earlier generations gradually adapted to the social and cultural environment around them.

Although the Government of Uttar Pradesh included the Kharwar community in the Scheduled Tribe list in selected districts in 2003, many members still face challenges in obtaining complete recognition due to gaps in awareness, documentation, and verification processes. Consequently, they find themselves in a position where their cultural identity is not easily identifiable, and their official identity as a Scheduled Tribe remains incomplete. This situation reflects a shared responsibility—both community awareness and administrative support need to strengthen to ensure that all eligible members of the Kharwar community can fully access the benefits associated with Scheduled Tribe status.

## Recommendations

1. Simplify Certification Processes: Revise administrative procedures to make tribal certification more accessible, possibly by accepting alternative forms of evidence for community identification.
2. Awareness Campaigns: Implement educational programs to inform the Kharwar community about their rights and the procedures to obtain necessary documentation.



3. Policy Reforms: Encourage modifications to policies that recognize the particular difficulties the Kharwar community faces and provide unique support systems.
4. Cultural Preservation Initiatives: Support community-led efforts to document and preserve traditional practices, ensuring cultural continuity.

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