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**ADIVASI**

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## EDITORIAL

*Advasi* is the oldest research journal in the field of Anthropology, Cultural and Developmental Studies being published uninterruptedly from the State of Odisha in the post-independence times. Odisha has the distinction of being the homeland of 62 tribal communities including 13 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PTGs). These tribes live across the length, and breadth of the State. They are found in all the districts in varying numbers. They exhibit wide divergence among themselves in their social, cultural and economic patterns. The specialty of this segment of the State's population is that these different tribal communities are at different levels of economic development. While some of the tribal communities are more acculturated, some are less acculturated and still some others have retained their traditional culture to a great extent. But the fact is, the traditional culture and way of living of these tribal communities are changing fast and their cultural identity is disintegrating. Before the pristine elements of tribal culture are lost in antiquity, it needs to be documented, disseminated conserved and promoted as far as possible. Keeping this in view, since last 50 years or so, the SCs and STs Research and Training Institute (SCSTRTI), which is the oldest Tribal Research Institute of the Country, has been publishing this nationally reputed Research Journal titled *Advasi* incorporating the original articles of reputed anthropologists, sociologists, development practitioners, experts and researchers who have worked and gained knowledge and experience in the field of tribal society and culture.

This is the 53<sup>rd</sup> Volume of the Journal that is enriched with 11 articles contributed by 22 eminent researchers on various aspects of tribal society, culture, problems and development based on their rich experience and sincere efforts.

The credit for the first article titled *Traditional Medicine in Tantric Traditions* goes to M.K. Jena, P. Pathi, A.B. Ota & K. Seeland. They have discussed about the strong faith of the traditional communities on magico-religious action of plants for human well-being based upon their belief systems. In a tribal society, the astrologers, shamans, the priests or the medicine men usually possess such knowledge with the divine blessings, as commonly believed. Such knowledge systems are beyond the range of ordinary knowledge or understanding and are mysterious. These extraordinary supernatural knowledge systems are often regarded as Tantrik knowledge having its roots in *Tantra*. In this paper the authors have presented the magico-religious use of certain plants sourced from *Santhali Tantra* or *Yogini Tantra* practiced by local tribal and non-tribal communities in Belghar area of Kandhamal district of Odisha. The knowledge of medicine traced from

*Santhali Tantra* is one of the many forms of traditional knowledge which has not been adequately explored. The paper is one such attempt towards exploring traditional knowledge systems which local people use in their everyday rationalities.

The second article captioned ***Reproductive Health Status of the Hill Kharias of Odisha, India*** contributed by G.K. Pedi, N. C. Dash and J. Dash is the outcome of an empirical attempt to study the reproductive health practices of the Hill Kharias: a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PTG) of north Odisha who thrive on a hunting and food gathering economy. It deals with the actual reproductive scenario of the Hill Kharia women observed on their fertility status that though their mean age at marriage is slightly low, the average fertility of their women is not so high and that the prolonged breastfeeding and the prevalence of widespread traditional contraception methods are responsible for their low fertility.

***Health Status and Health Care Services: A Study among the Tribal Communities of Jajpur District of Odisha*** is the third article authored by K.N. Dash. It highlights the health status and health care services prevalent among the tribal communities of Jajpur district of Odisha. It has intended to assess the general health condition of the tribals and to suggest viable measures for the improvement of the health status of the tribals in the Jajpur district of Odisha and to examine the disparities among different tribal communities with regard to access and utilization of modern health care services.

The fourth one is ***Tribal Women Participation in Watershed Development Programme: A Case Study from Western Odisha*** prepared by Suman Devi and Niharranjan Mishra. In this paper they have tried to explore the problems of participation of women of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Castes in watershed management in different phases of implementation in their study area. The findings of the study support the idea that the Watershed Committee and User Groups created for the watershed are mainly dominated by male members of the village.

The fifth article titled ***Environment Legislations and Community Conservation Initiatives: Challenges in a futuristic perspective*** presented by U.S. Acharya, B. Mohapatra, C.S. Satpathy and M.K. Jena discusses the issue of community initiatives on the conservation of bio-diversity. They have analysed various biodiversity conservation legislations in India in a context which indicates that there is relative incoherence among the various legal instruments which creates confusions and understanding gaps and thereby hindering the implementation processes. The authors argue that a law such as biological diversity conservation legislation should, by virtue of its content and purpose suffices to convince people about its intent.

The next ie, the sixth one is ***Unearthing the Roots of Alienation of Adivasis from Forest Land: - An analysis in the context of Odishan Tribes*** authored by K.P.



Jena which analyses the situation of tribal land alienation and involuntary displacement. It has sought to explore the tribals' traditional social and economic rights on various types of lands in tribal areas in the context of their concept of property and their culturally sanctioned pattern of ownership, management, inheritance and transfer of property, to explain the root causes and the processes that lead to land alienation and land encroachment in tribal areas and depeasantization of tribal people and to examine the impact of the protective legislations in protecting their land rights and laws for conservation of forests.

The paper presented by the young scholar Dr. Anil Ota titled ***Left-wing Extremism in India and its Implications on Tribal Tourism: The Case of Western Odisha*** is the seventh item of this volume. This thought provoking paper provides a perspective viewpoint based on an empirical study carried out by the author in sample Western Districts of Odisha concerning the implications of Left-wing extremism on the prospects of tribal tourism in the region. Appreciating the significance of socio-economic development on ideological fanaticism, this paper mentions about the socio-economic and demographic landscapes of Western Odisha as well as a brief genesis of the interventions made for the region's growth and progress. Other key aspects highlighted in the paper include a brief overview of extremism in the region and a succinct account of major tourist destinations in the study area.

The eighth paper named ***Struggle of the Tribals and Their Forest Rights in Odisha*** authored by Naresh Rout describes those concurrent social, economic, and environmental problems related to forest issues such as displacement, industrialization, mining and several protests in Odisha and their primary indicators which stand as barriers on the way of tribal development. It also highlights the people's viewpoint and expectations to the problem to act rightly during the process of formulation of appropriate policies and programmes for the tribal people. It puts the logical and considered plots to reveal the problems and their related issues as the background of the study.

The ninth paper captioned ***Indigenous knowledge of Shifting Cultivation: Observations on three Primitive Tribal Communities in Odisha*** contributed by P. Samantray, S.S. Mohanty, P. Patel & M.K. Jena is the outcome of a team work of empirical study. In this paper the authors have made an attempt to explore the indigenous knowledge and traditional knowledge by trying to understand the community perceptions relating to shifting cultivation. The authors have analyzed the community perceptions on a conceptual and theoretical understanding of indigenous knowledge. In this attempt they have studied three Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PTGs), namely, the Dongaria Kondh of Bissamcuttack Block, the Kutia Kondh of Tumudibandh Block and the Lanjia Saora of Gunupur Block in southern Odisha for whom shifting cultivation is a way of life.



The tenth article titled ***Myth and Migration: A Revisit to Historiography of Kuidina*** is presented by Anuja Mohan Pradhan. It is based on the theme that mobility is a dynamic factor of civilization whereas literature of an era is a still reflection in the array of time. Myths and migration are two factors in creating history of a culture. These factors, in context of Kuidina, call for a re-look much beyond the colonial perspective of *meria*, *mohua* and proselytization. In the Indian context, tribes and professional groups when converted into Jatis were given a Varna status, a *jati* rank and if necessary assigned a gotra. This constant shifting of races and peoples has given the mosaic of cultural assimilation to Kuidina – the land of the Kui speaking people of Odisha. It has emphasized that the present day research shall look into the socio-cultural history of the people of Kuidina, rising above the colonial view point.

The credit for presenting the eleventh article titled ***Creativity among the Tribes of Odisha: An Overview*** goes to S.C. Mohanty and Anjali Sahoo. In this article prepared upon analysis of relevant primary and secondary data, a sincere attempt has been made to highlight the creative faculty of the tribes of Odisha in the field of art, craft, dance, music, painting and literature. An arbitrary list of the magico-religious objects including deities and shrine crafts of Odishan tribes has also been presented in this article. An effort has also been made to find out the missing links and factors influencing creativity of the tribal communities as well.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to all the paper contributors without whom this Special Volume of *Adivasi* could not have seen the light of the day. I also gratefully acknowledge the contribution of our Associate Editor, Shri S.C. Mohanty, OSD (Research) who have taken all the pains and has burnt his mid-night oil to bring out this issue. It is hoped that the papers contained in this volume will be of great use for the academicians, researchers, planners, administrators and all those who are interested in the subject matter.

**31<sup>st</sup> December 2013,  
BHUBANESWAR.**

**Prof. A.B. Ota**

# Traditional Medicine in Tantric Traditions

M.K. Jena<sup>1</sup>, P. Pathi<sup>2</sup>, A.B. Ota<sup>3</sup>, K. Seeland<sup>4</sup>

## ABSTRACT

*Traditional communities have strong faith on magico-religious action of plants for human well-being. Such belief systems have their reflection in the traditional use of plants in various rites and rituals, religious performances and administration of folk medicines. Several ancient texts including the Veda have reference to magico-religious use of plants which is inextricably linked to the notion of well-being. In a tribal society, it is the astrologers or the shamans or the priests or the medicine men who usually possess such knowledge and they are the divine directed practitioners, as commonly believed. Such knowledge systems are beyond the range of ordinary knowledge or understanding and are mysterious. It is considered a secret knowledge and disclosed or communicated only to their disciples. This extraordinary supernatural knowledge systems are often regarded as Tantrik knowledge having its roots in Tantra.*

*The authors in this paper have presented magico-religious use of certain plants sourced from Santhali Tantra or Yogini Tantra practiced by local tribal and non-tribal communities in Belghar area of Kandhamal (erstwhile Phulbani) district of Odisha. The original sanskrit verse has been translated and the plants have been botanically identified for this presentation. The knowledge of medicine traced from santhali tantra is one of the many forms of traditional knowledge which has not been adequately explored. The paper is one such attempt towards exploring traditional knowledge systems which local people use in their everyday rationalities.*

**Key words:** Traditional medicine, tantric tradition, folk medicine, Santhali tantra

## Introduction

Traditional communities have strong faith on magico-religious action of plants for human well-being. Such belief systems have their reflection in the traditional use of plants in various rites and rituals, religious performances and administration of folk medicines. The use of plants in different religious practices is possibly the earliest and most prevalent form of religion (Airzpe, 1996). Since the birth of humanity populations have derived from nature aesthetic or spiritual sustenance and used it for creative ends. Various religious and supernatural beliefs and folklores help in the prevention of

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destruction of plants. There are several examples of trees worship tradition in many parts of the world under all religions and beliefs (Goldziher, 1971, Westermarck, 1968).

Several ancient texts including the *Veda* have reference to magico-religious use of plants which is inextricably linked to the notion of well-being. The beginning of Health Care Sciences in India may be traced to the Vedas - particularly to the Atharva Veda. The Kaushika Sutra belonging to Atharva Veda contains details about the art and knowledge of healing with plant remedies. The ancient name of the Science of Medicine is Ayurveda. Traditionally Ayurveda consisted of eight aspects of deliberation and hence latter became known as Astanga which includes Shalya (major surgery) Shalakya (minor surgery) Kaya chikitsa (treatment of disease of body), Bhuta Vidya (Demonology), Rasayana (elixir) and Vajikarana (aphrodisiacs). Astrology was an essential part of medical system in the treatment of the patients. Mani, Mantra and Ausadham were the expertise for each good and efficient physician. (Krishnamurthy 1991 in Jena, 1996).

The magico-religious practices concerning the uses of plants for various purposes starting from medicine to accomplishment of various other worldly objectives is not an open knowledge. In a tribal society, it is the astrologers, the shamans, the priests or the medicine men who usually possess such knowledge are practitioners by divine blessings, as commonly believed. Such knowledge systems are beyond the range of ordinary knowledge or understanding and are mysterious. It is considered a secret knowledge and disclosed or communicated only to those disciples who are chosen to be initiated into the trade. This extraordinary supernatural knowledge systems are often regarded as Tantrik knowledge having its root in *Tantra*.

### **Understanding *Tantra* and Tantrik rituals**

*Tantra* has carried the tradition from time immemorial to the present day as an expression of the deeper realization of man. It is also regarded as a science of infinity through the finite—the limited world of form. It teaches knowledge and experience of the macrocosm through the microcosm of the infinite by means of the limited, of supreme consciousness through individual consciousness. *Tantra* is a practical system. It comprises a vast number of practices to suit all personality types, combined with the highest concepts realized by the sages in deep meditation, over the ages. As a science it does not ask the practitioner to accept anything at face value. Validity is by and large, proved through personal experiences. The practitioners comprehend *Tantra* as something that is expanding one's awareness, extending the frontiers of mind beyond mind in an effort to attain spiritual knowledge and liberation. Much of *tantra* is concerned with worship in a ritualistic form regarded as practical *tantra*. Practical *tantra* is summed up by three main aspects: *Mantra* (the rules, principles and the actual system), *Yantra* (the vehicle of consciousness), and *Mandala* (the form of consciousness). Within these three is included everything in the material universe. In fact, everything around us, including ourselves is composed of *mantra* and *yantra*.

The *Varahi tantra* classifies the main subjects of *tantra* as consciousness, the creation and destruction of the universe (*Shristi and Pralaya*), worship of deities (*devi or deva*



*puja*), classification of beings, astronomy and astrology, different levels of awareness (*Lokas*), *nadis* and *chakras*, laws and duties in society, sacramental rites, (*Samskaras*) consecration of the forms of deities, *mantra*, *yantra* and *mandal*, *mudra*, *sadhana*, *pooja*, consecration of houses and wells etc., description of shrines, *yoga*, *maya*, *sadhana* (magic), *diksha*, *yoga*, medicines of many types including ayurveda and science. It also included alchemy, the art of living a fruitful and blissful life, and the use of sexual energy as means to unfold higher awareness.

*Tantra* grew slowly throughout the ages along with man's experimentation into himself and the world around him. It developed in all parts of the world; but did not follow a fixed pattern of growth, varying according to local circumstances and the influence of different sages and yogis. It is said that at one time 14,000 texts existed but now only a few remain as most of the traditional texts have been lost or destroyed. However, the scope of *tantra* is still vast, carrying every aspects of man's life from early morning to late at night and from birth to death. It intends to make life more harmonious and blissful in every action and situation.

*Tantra* is widely held to be based on the vedas but there is much evidence to suggest that the roots of tantra predates them, just as it appears *Tantra* existed in Europe long before the writings of the Bible. It is probably safest to say that the origin of both the vedas and of *tantra* is lost in the depth of pre-history. *Tantra* must have existed much long before it was written down. It is difficult to see how it arose directly from the vedas as the texts are so different.

*Tantra* aims at transforming everything in life into a ritual so that individual performs any action and thought with a feeling of worship and awareness. The action of bathing, dressing, sitting for worship, offering various symbolic sacrifices, the union of man and woman, the stages of development from conception, birth, and marriage to death are transformed into worship. Worship are not confined to the temples or shrines.

Much of the *tantra* is concerned with a ritualistic worship using the three basic tools - *mantra*, *yantra*, and *mandala*. This ritual is not based on superstition or blind faith but has been scientifically, systematically and practically designed to direct the whole process of living towards transcendence. All religions probably originally used these methods, but now the aim of ritualistic worship has been generally lost sight of and has degenerated into the performance of mere automatic and meaningless actions which are not understood by the practitioner.

The modern scientific mind looks at rites and rituals as more superstition because there is no basis for worship in modern scientific thoughts. However, it is believed, *tantra* utilizes systematic ritual with awareness as a means of contacting the things with which science cannot commune, even with its most delicate and complicated instruments. The rites of *tantra* do work if performed correctly and the proof is not to be found in books or theories but in one's own personal experience.

## Health traditions in Santhali Tantra

Healthcare and medical practices prevailing in remote tribal pockets of Odisha, especially in the Kandhamal district follows the prescriptions in *Santhali tantra* synonymous with *Yogini tantra*. Prescriptions in the palm leaf inscriptions of *Santhali tantra* seems very similar to *Bhuta Vidya* (demonology) and *vajikaran* (aphrodisiac) principles referred in ancient ayurveda.

During fieldwork with the Kutia Kondhs in Belghar area of Kandhamal district, the authors came across some folk healers who believed that *Santhali tantra* is the key instrument guiding them in medical practice. Mahadev Patro, belonging to the Gond community, who used to be a priest in the local Shiv temple, preserved one such palm leaf inscription, which according to him is the key medical reference. He used to offer regular worship especially on Tuesday and Wednesday, offerings to the leaf inscription and conducting rites and rituals at intervals to ensure effectiveness of the prescriptions in the text. In some particular day of the year, the leaf inscription is offered blood by sacrificing pigeons. If needed by the *Yogini* - the Lord of the *tantra*, the practitioner used to puncture his finger to offer blood. On Thursdays he does not practice any prescription from the text and never in evening the text is to be consulted. He lived on the firm belief that as long as the text is properly respected the practitioner would not fail in his effort to cure various ailments and human sufferings. The local people believed that Mahadev must have did lot of *sadhana* to master the art of healing with aid of the text.

Mahadev would not share the text with anybody giving the impression that if the text falls in the wrong hands the medicinal efficacy of the prescriptions can never be realized. For a practice, he would study the symptoms in a person and then chose the right prescription from the text and after that would recommend some rites, perform some acts or rituals, and finally administer the medicine. According to him, the faith of the patient in the practitioner matters most in realizing the efficacy of the prescription and drug administration. Mahadev, however, was not conservative about sharing the knowledge rather was careful about choosing the right person to share the knowledge with. According to him, rarely there are people who are gifted with such precious possession of knowledge.

Kuttia Kondhs often invite Mahadev for *graha shanti* puja for children and adults and he is also the last referral in the case of serious patients at their last stage. He performs rituals and administers medicines strictly according to the rules of *tantra* in the text. By virtue of his dedication and services to the cause he is always revered with high esteem by others. For his services he demands nothing, although occasionally he receives some grains or vegetables from the kinsfolk of the patient. Although everybody knows that the Tantric text is possessed by him yet nobody tries to steal the text for the prevailing fear that the person committing it would immediately die out of blood vomiting.

This article presents some of the Sanskrit verses shared by Mahadev with the authors. He also guided for the meaning of the verses and the identification of plants described in that. At the outset Mahadev explained that the text covers most of the medical tips



that Lord Shiva shared with his wife Parvati. The story reveals that, once out of curiosity, Parvati asked her Lord to know the different aspects of plant world and their healing qualities. The reply of Shiva with respect to this question is the essence as presented here. Here the lord has pointed out the good and evils of the society as well as the medicinal use of many plants. Only those conversant with the medical aspect of the plants are presented with their corresponding botanical name.

*Purbabhadra padam yasya sirisa\* mula gahyayate*

*Nijange guptabhabeca dharane sarva santoyah*

**\* Albizia lebeck (L) Benth., Indian Walnut (E)**

All types of fears are dispelled, diseases are cured and success in all positive endeavors is assured, when the root of this tree is worn secretly on a particular day with a particular type of constellation (*Purbabhadra*) present in the sky.

*Suklamakanda\*mulam ca pusyarke yadi dharayet*

*Sarva graha dosham hanya sarvasanti prodovabah*

**\* Calotropis gigantea (L) R.Br., Giant Milk Weed/Swallow Wart**

The root of this tree is worn in the left hand of the women and right hand of the men on any Sunday when there is a constellation called *pushya* present in the sky. This cures many types of diseases and drives away any type of bad omen that might be present.

*Punarnaba\*pichiumardham\*\*sidhartham\*\*\*ghrita sanyuktam*

*Dhumrapradanam yasyanam tasya rishta vinasakrita*

**\* Boerhavia diffusa (L.), Spreading Hogweed (E), \*\* Azadirachta indica (L.),  
Neem (E)**

**\*\*\* Brassica juncea (L.) Czern & Coss, Mustard (E)**

Equal quantity of these three herbs is to be mixed up with the butter of the cow milk. This solution is then fried in the fire. The smoke coming out of the fire when inhaled cures disease and dispels the enemies.

*Guluchi\* mulamadaya srikhanda\*\* saha peshitam*

*mastake tilakam badya sarvarishta prashantayet*

**\* Tinospora cordifolia (Wild) Miers, \*\* Santalum album (L), Sandal Wood Tree (E)**

All types of headaches and other diseases is cured by putting the mixture of the root of this tree and coconut water on the head.

*Dhabalakanda\* mulam ca pushyarke gruhitam punah*

*Jalenam peshitam tasya mastake dharayet yadi*

*Sarva roga sarva byadhi sarvaduikha vinasanam*

*Sarvarishta sarvapida sarvaklesha nivaranam*

**\* Calotropis gigantea (L) R.Br., Giant Milk Weed/Swallow Wart (E)**

The root of this plant is brought and grated with water on any Sunday, when the *Pushya* star is present in the night, so that all types of disease, misery, evil spirit and pain vanishes.



*Pushyarke dhabalam gunjamulam\* grahanamutamam  
sishukanthe samadaya grahadoshadi shantikam*

**\* Abrus precatorius (L), Crabs eye (E)**

All types of child-diseases resulting out of the bad effect of the planets are exterminated by wearing the roots of this plant on any Sunday when *Pushya* Star is present in the sky.

*Arkabara prbhate ca sira dhautam susnana keih  
Yena bilwamulam dhrutwa sarvadosheshu santikam*

**\*Aegle marmelos (L) Corr., Bael Tree (E)**

When this tree's root is worn in the right hand of the male and left hand of the female all types of evil effects of the planets are dispelled. This is to be done on Sunday after taking bath.

*Daruharidra\* rajani\*\* raktachandana\*\*\* champakaih\*\*\*\*  
Kumkumaia\*\*\*\*\* sahasanyogam peshitam madhusanyutaih  
Gutikam karayehasya raudre sushka samacharet  
Dharanasya ruchikantha sarvarishta vinasanam*

**\* Barberis asiatica (Roxb) Indian Barbery (E), \*\* Curcuma longa (L.) Turmeric (E)  
\*\*\* Pterocarpus santalinus L.F. Red Sandal Wood (E), \*\*\*\* Michelia champaca  
\*\*\*\*\* Crocus sativus L.Saffron (E)**

All these plants are to be mixed up and grated together. When small tablets thus prepared are kept with oneself, all types of miseries and agonies are mitigated.

*Mustaka\* mushiraa\*\* caiba yasthimadhu samanwitam  
Ghrutena peshitam tasya vakhedrishta vinasakrutam*

**\* Cyperus rotundus (L.), \*\* Vetiveria zizanioides (NASH), Vetiver (E)**

All types of hazards are feeble when equal quantity of root of these plants are taken with *yasthimadhu* and grated with butter/ghee of cow milk.

*Sauribara prabhate ca aswastha\* vrikshya mulayoh  
Grahanam kurute tasya jalena peshitam punah  
Tilakam shira deshena dharayet tasya manabah  
Tasya nishta vinasam ca sukham saubhagyam bardhanam*

**\*Ficus religiosa (L.) Pippal Tree (E)**

On any Saturday the root of this tree is grated with water so as to relieve oneself from all types of pains and diseases.

*Pushyarukhyarkabare ca mushali\* grahyayennarah  
Tamra damarika madhye sthapitam gupta bhabe vah  
Punsha dakshina bahune yuvatyam bamabahuiaih  
Dharayet tasya guptena sarvarishta vinasanam  
Sarva klesham, sarva duhkham, sarva kashta nibaranam  
Sarva saubhagyam apnoti kathitam parameswareih*

**\*Curculigo orchioides, Gaertn.**

The root of this tree is collected on any Sunday with *Pushya constellation* and kept inside a Copper Talisman. This talisman is to be worn in the right hands of the male and left hands of the female to lessen all types of sufferings from difficult diseases immediately. This talisman is also instrumental in weeding out penury.

*Chandragrahana kale ca bimbimulam\* tu grahayet  
Kantho malam kritam yasya rishtadi nashanam*

**\*Trichosanthes cucumerina L., L: Mahakal**

The root of this plant is worn as a garland in the neck in order to dispel evil spirits and everyone becomes hypnotized by the person who wears it.

*Gosringam sriphalam\* mulam priyangu debakashtha\*\* kaih  
Marjara mala champevam\*\*\* gajamutram ca sanyuktam  
Bansatwacha' kusthavutim\*\*\*\* banhina nikhyepa bhavet  
Tasya dhupa pradanena sarva rishta vinyasyati  
Sutika griha madhye ca vasyasya dhupa danovah  
Sarva graha dosham hanyat nischayam parameswareih*

**\* Aegle marmelos (L.) Corr., \*\* Polyalthia longifolia (SONN.) Thw., Mast Tree (E)  
\*\*\*Michelia champaca (L.), Champak (E), \*\*\*\* Costus speciosus (Koenig.) Sm.  
'Bamboo bark, Gajamutram – Elephant urine**

It means that the God is telling to his wife (Goddess) about dispelling the evil spirits and negative forces of wicked people. All the above mentioned things are to be grated together and are to be simmered in the fire. The smoke thus coming out is to be inhaled deeply to dispel the evil effects of the planets on the children and is to be interspersed in the room where the child is born in order to mitigate any evil effects.

*Bilwamulam\* samadaya hastena dharayet yadi  
Sarvarishta vinashasyat sarva klesha nibaranam*

**\* Aegle marmelos (L.) Corr.**

When the root of this tree is worn (after taking bath) in the right hands of the male and left hands of the female, all types of miseries are mitigated.

*Sauribara prabhate ca aswastha\* mula grahayet  
Katyam badhwancha drudhena atmarakshva prakirtitah*

**\* Ficus religiosa (L.)**

On any Saturday the root of this tree is brought and worn in the wrist for self defense. The person is safe in any dangerous situation. The effect is lost on disclosing the matter.

*Dhatri\* mulam bilwa\*\*mulam rudra jata\*\*\*mulasya ca  
Pushyarka vogeno grahanam kurute punah  
Tamra damarika madhye yatnena sthapitam yada  
Bahunam dharanam tasya byaghrabhaya nibaranam*



\* *Emblica officinalis* Gaertn. Indian Goosberry (E), \*\* *Aegle marmelos* (L.) Corr.  
\*\*\* *Celosia cristata* L. Cock's Comb (English)

On any Sunday when the *Pushya* star is present, the roots of these trees and plant are to be collected and kept in a copper talisman. This helps in dispelling the fear of tigers in the forest. Anyone who has to go to the forest needs to wear this in order to save himself from tigers.

*Pushyarka mathava bhauma basaram yadi tisthati*  
*Suradumra\* mulam tasya grahanam guptabhaboyah*  
*Salile peshanam caiba tat sange nira misrita*  
*Sebane sarva rogam ca vinasam bhabati dhrubam*

\* *Polyalthia longifolia*

The roots of this plant are brought on any Sunday or Tuesday when the *Pushya* star is present and masticated with water. Then more water is added to it and it is taken to cast away the vicious effects of the evil spirits.

*Bramhadandi\* mulam-grahyam rudra jata\*\* mulasya ca*  
*Bilwa\*\*\* mula samyuktam salile peshanam tatha*  
*Tasya niralpa panena sarva vyadhi nibaranam*  
*Sarva rishta binasyanti trune banhimibasmata*

\**Tricholepis glaberrima* DC, \*\**Celosia cristata*, \*\*\**Aegle marmelos*

The roots of these species are brought and grated in water. This water is taken to cure many irrevocable diseases just as the grass is easily consumed in the fire.

*Sauribara prbhate ca nirgundi\*mula grahayet*  
*Punshena dakshina bahwe narinam bama bahwakai*  
*Snanante dharayat yasya sah sarirei jwaram duram*  
*Ekahikam dwahikam ca trahikam chaturahakam*  
*Sarva jwaravinyanti sarva klesha nibaranam*  
*Sarvasuvamayam devi na ca anyatha kadachanam*

\* *Vitex negundo* CL., Indian Privet (English)

The God is addressing to the Goddess about different types of fever and their remedies. That on any Sunday the root of this plant is to be worn in the right hand of the male and left hand of the female or inside a talisman which must have been made on the same day for curing any type of fever immediately.

*Nagara\*mula dhustaram\*\* caiba samabhagena gruhitam*  
*Sirena dharayati yasya kaminyam prasabadoye*  
*Satwaram prasabam tasya sarva klesha nivananam*  
*Sarva dukkha vinasaya na canytha kadacanam*

\* ?, \*\* *Datura metel* (L.)



Equal quantities of both the plants mentioned above is to be brought and applied on the forehead of the woman to relieve her of the delivery pain and also to make the delivery process smoother.

*Raktapamarga\* mulam ca rakta chandana\*\*sanyuktei*

*Jalena peshitam tasya tilakam dharayet yadi*

*Phala pushpam strinam tasya patitam bhumibhagoyoh*

*Sarva klesha vinasascha sarvani sarvamuttamam*

**\* Achyranthes aspera (L.) Prickly Chaff Flower (E), \*\*Pterocarpus santalinus L.f. Red Sandal Wood (E)**

The God is addressing the Goddess about the pregnant women who have problem regarding the release of placenta after the child is born. The roots of these plants are to be brought and masticated with water. This solution is to be applied on the forehead of the pregnant woman for smooth removal of the placenta.

*Ashoka\*mulam grihitwam jalena sidhyate yadi*

*Madhwanupane sebyam ca rutu dosha vinasayate*

**\*Saraca asoca (Roxb.)de. Wilde**

The root of this plant is collected and is boiled in the water. This decoction is mixed with a little honey and given to the ailing woman to cure any type of menstrual problems.

*Kshirika\* mula dugdhena peshanam kurute yadi*

*Sebanam madhu sanyukte manaba mana stambhanam*

**\* Hanilkara achras (Roxb.) Dab.**

The root of this plant is grated with cow-milk and then taken with a little honey to increase one's concentration.

*Kunkuma\* sindura<sup>1</sup> kustham\*\* srikhandam\*\*\* dhumardhita*

*Kapale tilakam dhritwa mehayet sacharacharam*

**\* Crocus sativus (L.), Saffron (E), \*\* Costus speciosus, \*\*\*Santalum album Sandal Wood (E), # Vermilion**

All the aforementioned things are to be mixed up in equal proportions add with a little honey and applied on the forehead to hypnotize any person at a glance.

*Sriphala\* dala dugdhena peshana chatikarayet*

*Gharsanam tilakam yasya mohanam sarvoto mahi*

**\* Aegle marmelos**

The leaves of this tree are grated with cow-milk and dried to make small tablets. At the time of need these tablets are again grated with water and applied on the forehead to hypnotize all.

*Sweta punarnaba\* mula jibanti\*\*mula sanyukte*

*Rudrajata\*\*\* mulam tasya madhyahne bhrigu basare*

*Samabhage grihitwatu krushna dhenu payosya ca  
Peshane tilakam dhritwa sarvapranam bimohita*

\* **Boerhavia diffusa (L.) Spreading Hogweed (E), \*\* *Tinospora cordifolia* (Willd.) Miers**

\*\*\* ***Celosia cristata*,**

In the afternoon time any Friday the roots of these plants are brought secretly and grated with the milk of a black cow. This is applied on the forehead to hypnotize a whole mass of people.

*Grahano paragam yasya sauribare bhabet yadi  
Adityabara mathaba tasya bele tu nirnayet  
Bhrungaraja\* mula dhritwam raudrena sushka mapnuyat  
Swabakre dharayet yasya bhasena sarvomohita*

\* ***Bacopa monieri (L.) Wettst. Thyme Leaved Gratiola (E)***

On any Saturday or Sunday, when either Lunar Eclipse or Solar Eclipse takes place, the root of this plant is collected and kept dried. This dried root is kept inside the mouth secretly in order to hypnotize people while delivering speech.

*Krushna dhustara\* mulam ca swetaparajita\*\* statha  
Aswattha\*\*\* mula dharayet sauribasare  
Sarvapranam chittam mohyam sarvam basibhuta bhabet  
Naranari samakhyata basyatam bhabatu dhrubam*

\* ***Datura metel*, \*\* *Clitoria ternatea (L.)*, \*\*\* *Ficus religiosa***

The roots of these plants are collected on any Saturday and are worn in the hands to hypnotize men and women alike.

*Bilwapatra\* kare dhritwa nimba patram\*\*punah punah  
Yasya namochcharanam ca dahye muchchatanam bhabet*

\* ***Aegle marmelos*, \*\* *Azadirachta indica*, A. Juss.**

The leaves of these two trees are collected on any day and thrown into the fire uttering the name of the person on whom one wants to take revenge. The person's life becomes miserable after performing this rite.

*Dhatri\*kastha samadaya bilwa\*\*kashtham ca sanyuktam  
Chitagni na dahyed yasya namochcharana purvakam  
Tasyochchatana kurbita yasya nama smaram tada  
Tasye gokshira sebyam ca sarva santi phalapradah*

\* ***Emblica officinalis* Indian Gooseberry (English)**

The woods of these two trees are collected and is thrown \ simultaneously in to the funeral fire uttering the name of the man on whom one wants to take revenge. The man's life becomes miserable afterwards. The effect of this can be neutralized simply by taking cow milk.



## Conclusion

The concepts and practices of folk medicine are based upon the humoral theories, cosmological speculations and magic. The main practice field of this discipline is mid-wifery, bone setting, super natural curing practices, with main emphasis being on utilization of natural herbs, roots, plants and other natural things around them. Empirical knowledge of local communities especially in tribal region, in general, is transmitted through verbal means and folklore from generation to generation. Their use of medicine is sometimes rudimentary, sometimes very specialized, in certain cases based on astrological herbalism and in several cases they take to tantric traditions, magic, mysticism, religious performances with or without execution of a sacrifice. The knowledge of medicine traced from *santhali tantra* is one of the many forms of traditional knowledge which has not been adequately explored. Moreover, the concept of disease and treatment in a tribal society is unique, sometimes simple to understand and sometimes too complex to interpret.

Traditional medicine is value based, no matter how diverse it is in differential social setting and cultural contexts. There are growth-positive, growth-negative and growth-neutral values in every society associated with traditional healthcare. Such knowledge systems would contribute immensely in the integration and synthesis with any other recognized system of medicine as well help preservation and conservation of a great diversity of important flora. As long as folk uses of the plants continue to be there, be it for medicine or food or for material and religious culture, people would continue to care and conserve such species from extinction. The survival of a culture requires integrity and creativity. The survival of ethno-medicinal culture requires that the dynamics that kept it alive over centuries be protected and cherished.

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# Reproductive Health Status of the Hill Kharias of Odisha, India

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## ABSTRACT

This is an empirical attempt to study the reproductive health practices of the Hill Kharias: a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PTG) of north Odisha. They are sparsely distributed mostly in Mayurbhanj District of Odisha. For this study Data have been collected from 460 ever-married women of the reproductive age group (15-49 years) during 2010. The present paper deals with the actual reproductive scenario of the Khariawomen. It is noticed that the Kharias are extremely poor and thrive on a food gathering and hunting economy. The observation of their fertility shows that though their mean age at marriage is slightly low (17 years), the average fertility of their women is not so high i.e. 3.1 (mean conception). This community is far away from the reach of the modern family and health services provided by the government. However, it is observed that the prolonged breastfeeding and the prevalence of widespread traditional contraception methods are identified as the responsible factors for affecting such a low fertility of the present population.

**Keywords:** Primitive, reproductive health, conception, fertility, breastfeeding, contraception

## Reproductive Health

Reproductive health has been a recent thrust issue in most of the countries in the developing world; India is no exception. Reproductive health includes the age at marriage, reproductive performance and fertility regulation, care during pre-natal, natal and post-natal period, breast feeding and infant care practices etc.

World Health Organization (WHO, 1995) estimates that of the 150 to 200 million pregnancies that occur worldwide each year, about 23 million lead to serious complications and half a million of these end with the loss of mother. Ninety nine percent of these deaths take place in developing countries.

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Women are more vulnerable in the society, especially the poor tribal women who are more prone to the reproductive health problems such as pregnancy, delivery and post-delivery complications, side effects of contraceptive use and other reproductive health problems. To avoid these health problems, women should have health checkup like ante-natal check-up during pregnancy, natal and post natal check-up at the time of delivery and after delivery which would protect the health condition of the future born babies of women. Further, health check-up for children (Immunization and other ailments) would maintain a good health status and ultimately better survival of children.

### The Hill Kharia

The Hill Kharias are widely spread over Odisha, Bihar, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh. They claim to be the autochthons people of the Mayurbhanj Hills. The Similipal hill ranges are the hearth and home of the Hill Kharia. They are also found in insignificant numbers in Manbhum, Chotanagpur and Singhbhum in Bihar, Midinapur and Bankura in West Bengal, and Baleswr, Keonjhar, Sambalpur and Dhenkanal in Odisha. According to the 2001 Census the total Kharia population in Odisha was 1.9 lakhs and increased to about 2.2 lakhs in 2011, (Census 2001. 2011).

### Age at menarche

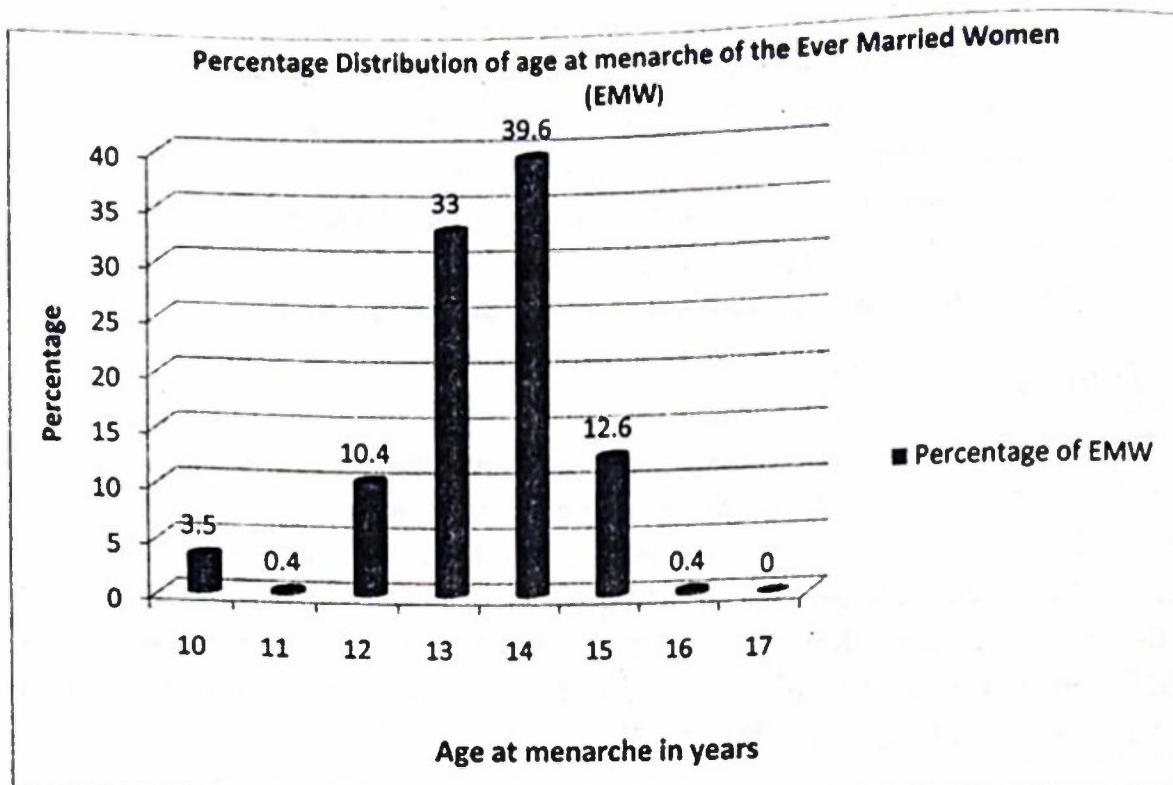
Age at menarche is important to record the biological age of the members of any community for their entry into the reproductive age,(Balgir,1994). The age at menarche of the Kharia women is given below.

**TABLE - I**

**Age at menarche of the Ever Married Women (EMW)**

Age at menarche in years	Number of EMW	Percentage
10	16	3.5
11	2	0.4
12	48	10.4
13	152	33
14	182	39.6
15	58	12.6
16	2	0.4
17	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Mean age at Menarche – 13.4</b>		

**FIGURE - I**



The mean age at menarche of the Kharia women is found to be 13.4 years. Maximum percentages of the Kharia women attain menarche at the age of 13 to 14 years. It is interesting to note that only 0.4% women attain menarche at the age of 16 years.

**Age at First Marriage**

Age at first marriage is the actual age of women for their entry into the reproductive process, (Pandey and Talwar, 1987). The age at first marriage of the Kharia women is given below.

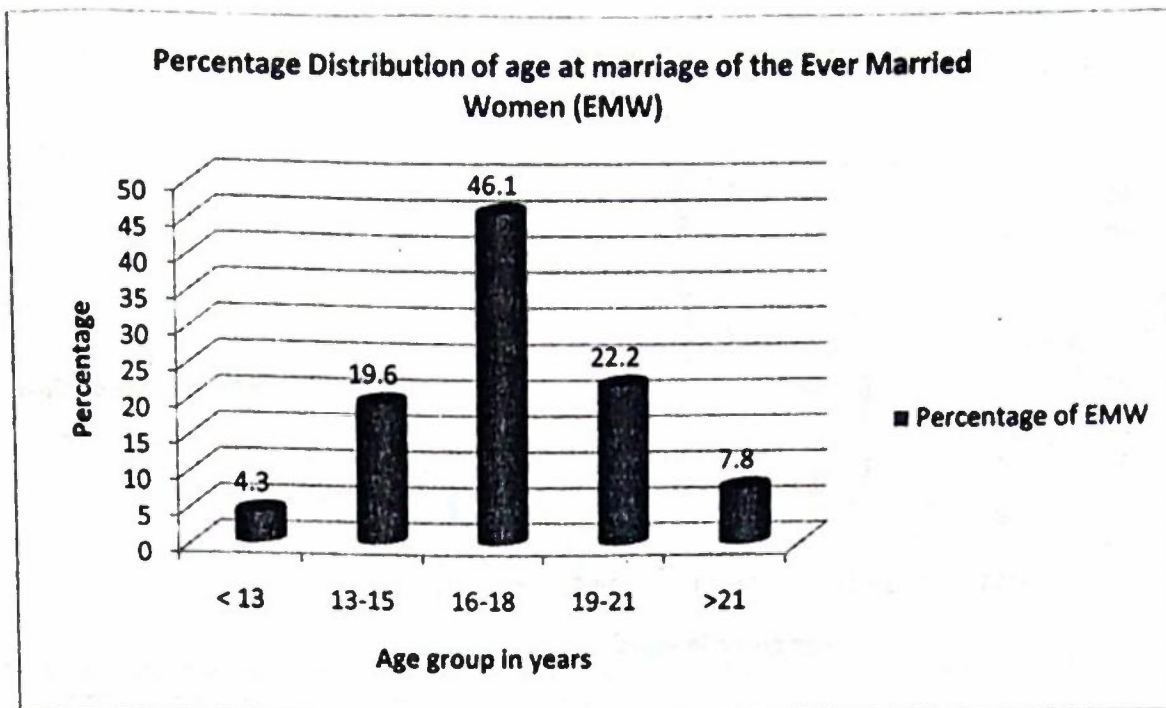
**TABLE - 2**

**Age at Marriage of the Ever Married Women (EMW)**

Age group in years	Number of EMW	Percentage
< 13	20	4.3
13-15	90	19.6
16-18	212	46.1
19-21	102	22.2
>21	36	7.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Mean age at Marriage - 17.2 years</b>		



**FIGURE - 2**



The mean age at marriage of the Kharia women is found to be 17.2 years. Table-2 shows that maximum percentage of women (46.1%) get married between 16 to 18 years. It is also observed that 4.3% women get married below 13 years of age which is a little early.

**Age at First Conception**

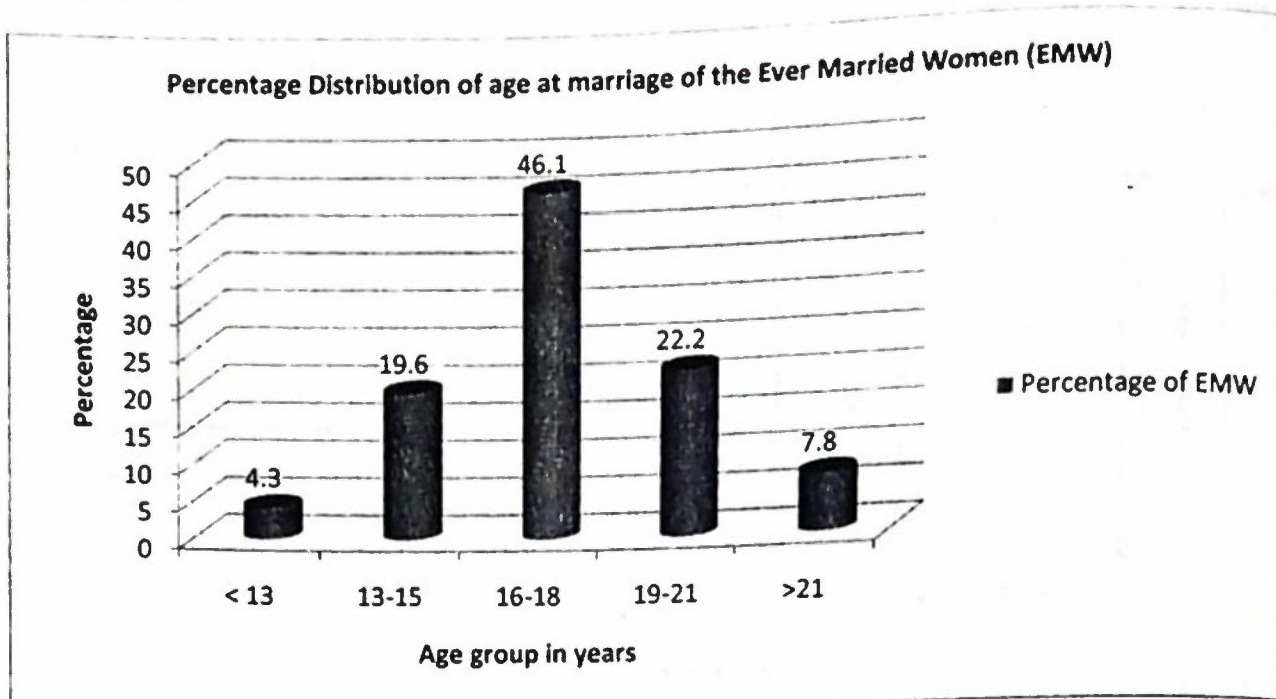
Age at first conception shows the gap between the age at marriage and the readiness the women for the first birth. The Age at first conception of the Kharia women is given below.

**TABLE - 3**

**Age at 1st Conception of the Ever Married Women (EMW)**

Age group in years	Number of EMW	Percentage
<13	2	0.5
13-15	88	19.1
16-18	192	41.7
19-21	124	27
22-24	38	8.2
>24	16	3.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Mean age at 1st Conception - 17.98 years</b>		

**FIGURE - 3**



The mean age at first conception is found to be 17.98 years. This shows that the gap between age at marriage and age at first conception is nearly eight months. This is also observed from the table that maximum percentage of women (41.7%) have conceived between 16 to 18 years.

### Age at First Child Birth

Age at first child birth of any woman belonging to any community is very important not only to the woman but also to the family and society. The age at first child birth of the Kharia women is given below.

**TABLE - 4**

**Age at 1st Child Birth of the Ever Married Women (EMW)**

Age group in years	Number of EMW	Percentage
<13		
13-15	52	11.3
16-18	178	38.7
19-21	116	25.2
22-24	94	20.4
>24	20	4.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Mean age at 1st child birth - 19.0 years</b>		



**FIGURE - 4**

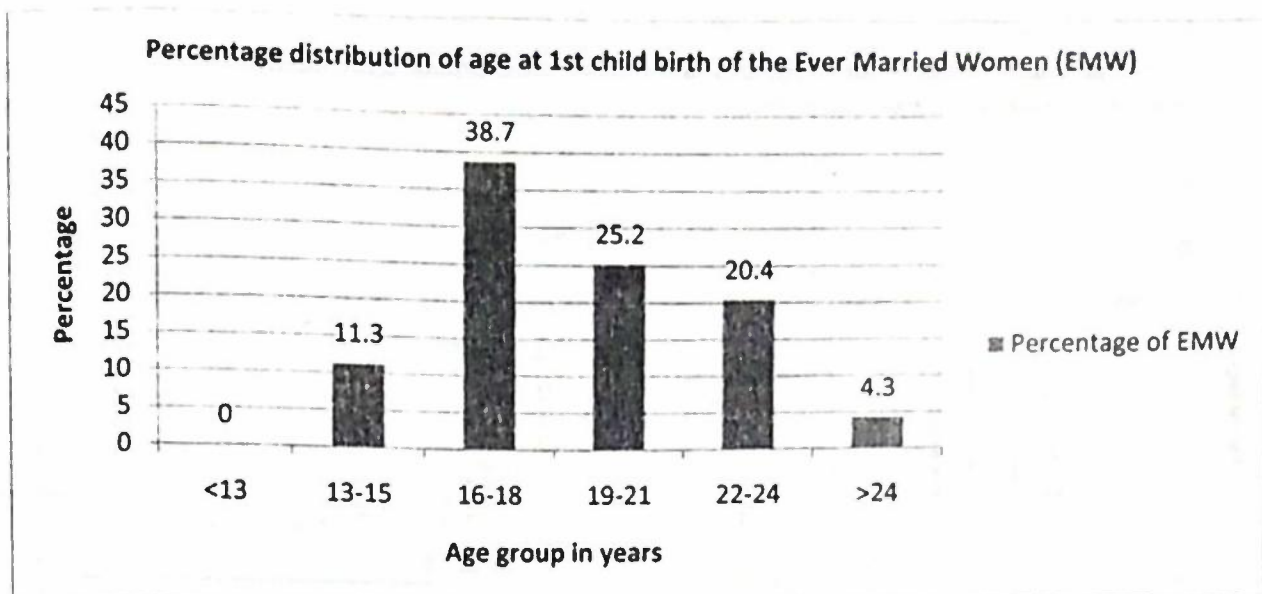


Table 4 reveals the mean age at first child birth of the Kharia women which is 19.0 years. The gap between the mean age at first marriage and the mean age at first childbirth is 1.8 years which further confirms the fact that the average women conceive after eight months of marriage.

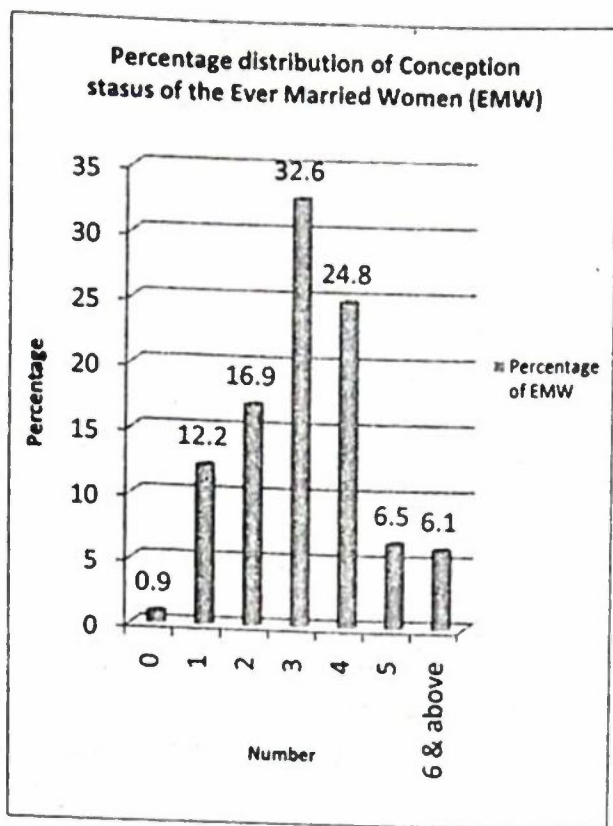
### Fertility Performance

Human fertility is responsible for the biological replacement and maintenance of the human species. Table 4.3.5 presents the fertility performance of the ever married women. The total number of conceptions, uterine wastage (abortion and stillbirth) and live-births are some of the major findings of the study.

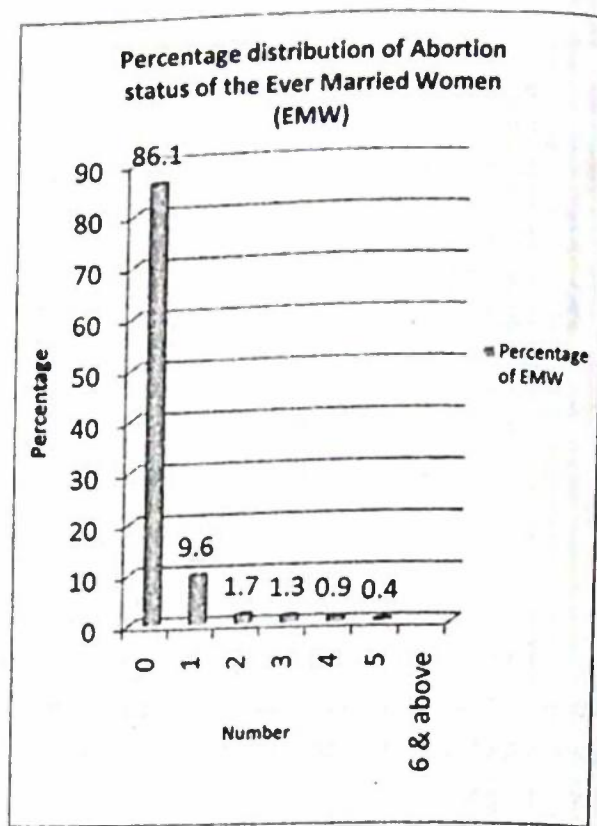
**TABLE - 5**  
**Fertility performance of the Ever Married Women (EMW)**

Number	Conception		Abortion		Stillbirth		Live-birth	
	No of EMW	%	No of EMW	%	No of EMW	%	No of EMW	%
0	4	0.9	396	86.1	412	89.6	15	3.3
1	56	12.2	44	9.6	36	7.8	74	16.1
2	78	16.9	8	1.7	6	1.4	97	21.1
3	150	32.6	6	1.3	2	0.3	146	31.7
4	114	24.8	4	0.9	4	0.9	88	19.1
5	30	6.5	2	0.4			28	6.1
6 & above	28	6.1					12	2.6
<b>Total EMW</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total no of</b>	<b>Conception -1436</b>		<b>Abortion -104</b>		<b>Stillbirth -70</b>		<b>Livebirth -1270</b>	
<b>Mean (per woman)</b>	<b>3.12</b>		<b>0.23</b>		<b>0.15</b>		<b>2.76</b>	

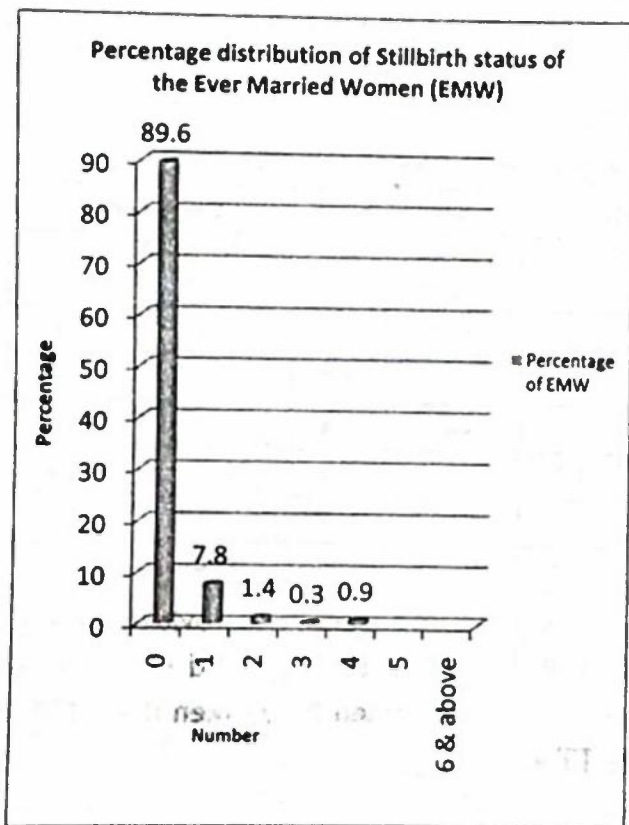
**FIGURE - 5. a**



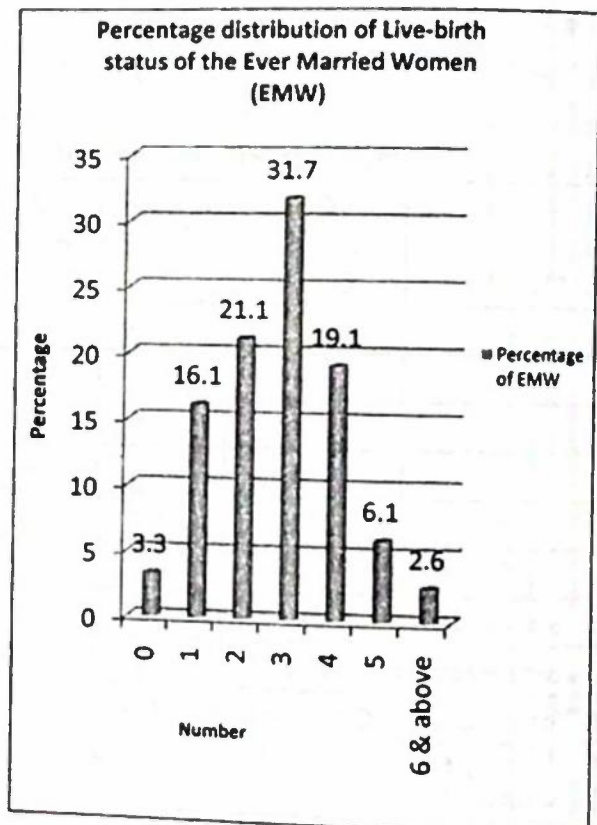
**FIGURE - 5. b**



**FIGURE - 5. c**



**FIGURE - 5. d**





The total number of conception of the 460 Kharia women is found to be 1436 and thus the mean conception per women is 3.12. The conceptions terminating before birth are taken as uterine wastage (Abortion + Stillbirth). In this population the uterine wastage is found to be 0.38 which is a moderate value. It is further noticed that the total number of live-births of the women is 1270 and thus the mean live-births per woman is 2.76.

### Antenatal Care

Antenatal care refers to pregnancy related health care provided by a doctors or health workers in a medical facility or at home.

**TABLE - 6**  
**Antenatal checkup received**

Antenatal checkup received		Antenatal checkup not received	
Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
298	64.8	162	35.2
Iron Folic Acid (IFA)		Tetanus Toxoid (TT)	
No of EMW	%	No of EMW	%
146	31.7	207	45

**FIGURE - 6**

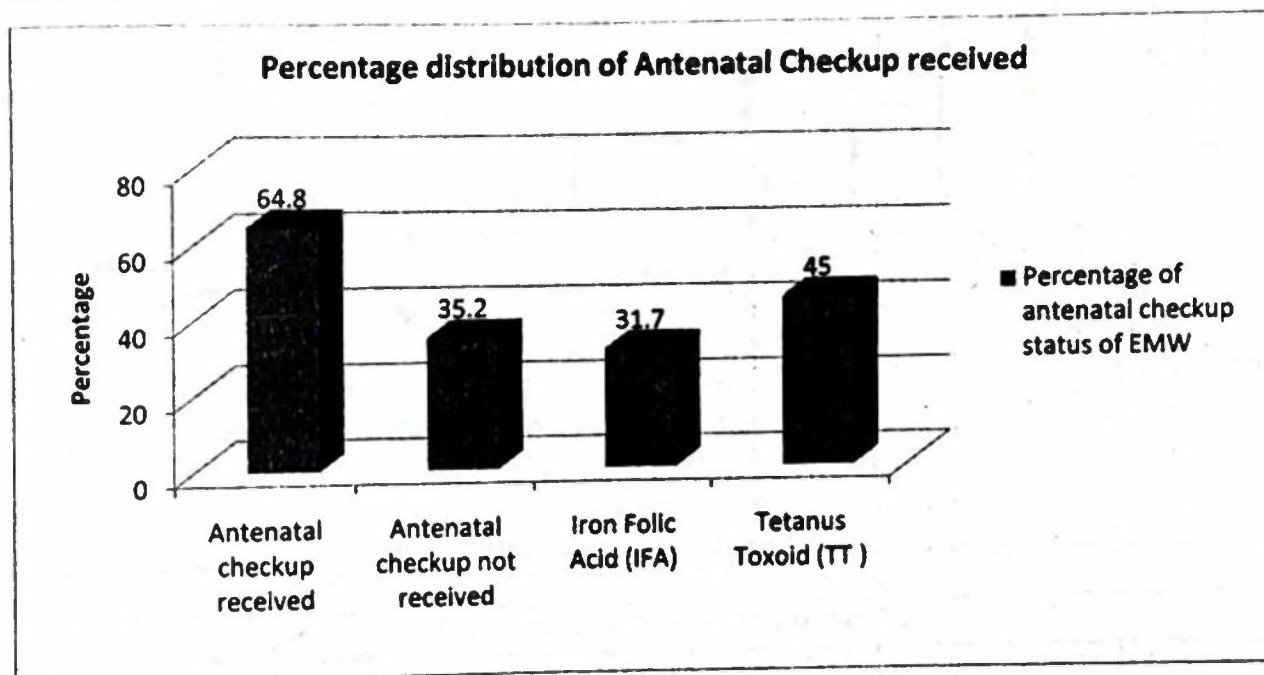
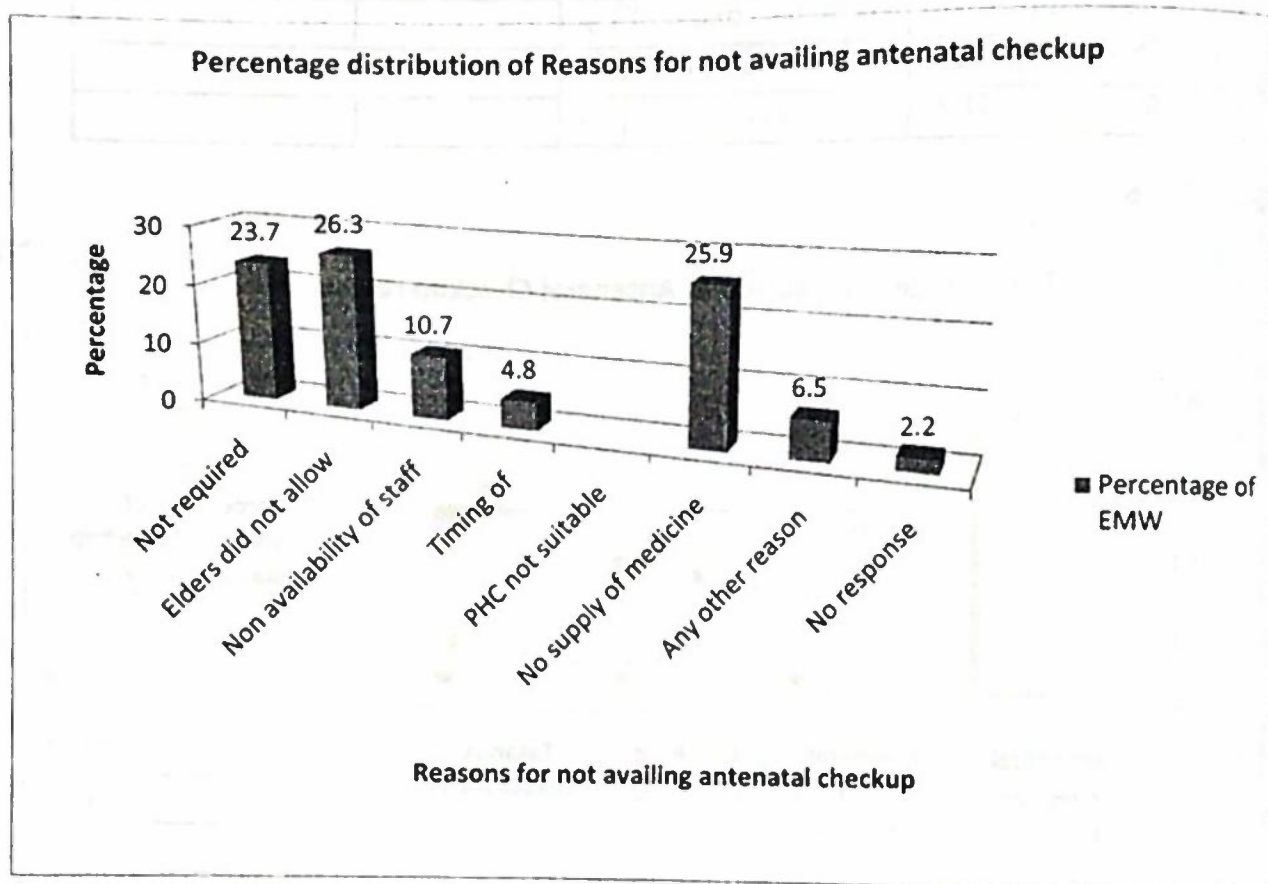


Table 6 highlights the acceptance of the maternal care services provided by the Government. 64.8% women received antenatal checkup where as 35.2% did not receive any antenatal checkup. It is also observed that 31.7% of the women have taken IFA tablets and 45.0% of the women have taken at-least one TT vaccine.

**TABLE - 7**  
**Reasons for not availing antenatal checkup**

Reasons for not availing antenatal checkup	Number of EMW	Percentage
Not required	109	23.7
Elders did not allow	121	26.3
Non availability of staff	49	10.7
Timing ofPHC not suitable	22	4.8
No supply of medicine	119	25.9
Any other reason	30	6.5
No response	10	2.2
Total	460	100

**FIGURE - 7**



There are several reasons reported by the women for not availing any antenatal checkup. Maximum percentage of women reported that elders did not allow (26.3%) and there is no supply of medicine (25.9%) while 23.7% women also reported that it is not required and pregnancy is a normal phenomenon.



## Natal Care

One of the important major thrust areas of the RCH programme in India is to encourage and promote deliveries under proper hygienic conditions and under the supervision of trained health professionals.

**TABLE - 8**  
Place of delivery

Place of delivery	No of EMW	Percentage
Home	367	79.8
Hospital	93	20.2
Total	460	100

**FIGURE - 8**

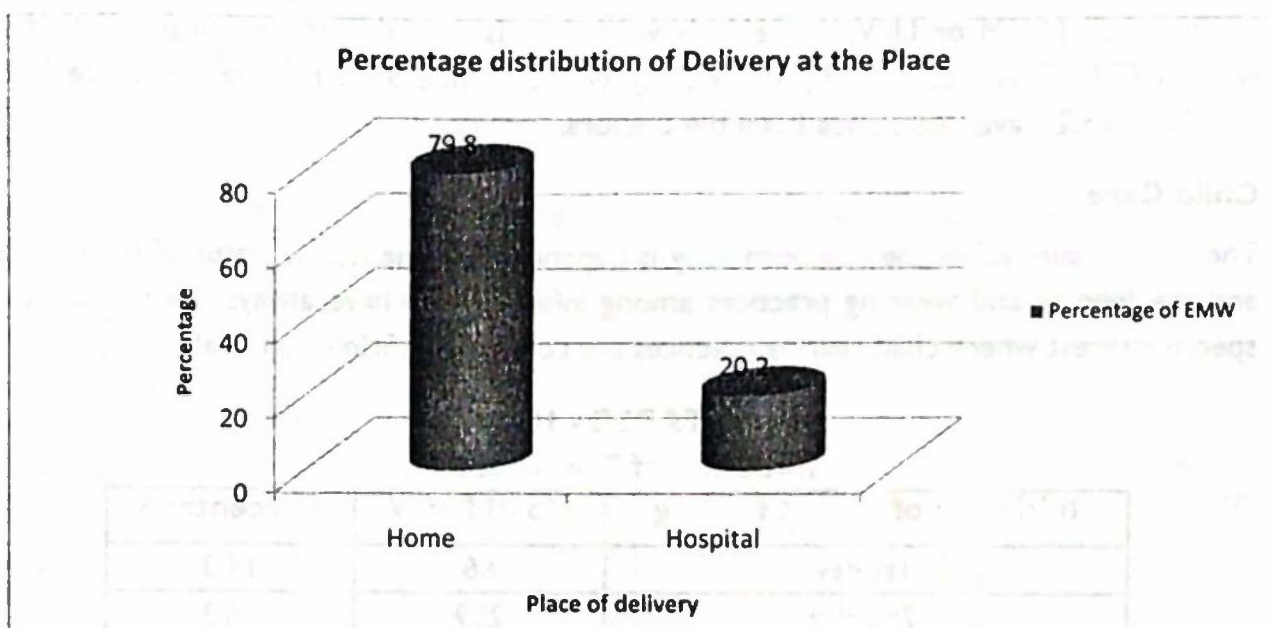


Table-8 shows that in spite of the various schemes of Government for promoting institutional delivery, 79.8% women still have home deliveries and 20.2% go for institutional delivery.

**TABLE - 9**

Birth assisted by Doctor/ANM/Elderly Woman					
Individual attending the delivery					
Doctor		ANM/LHV		Elderly woman	
No of EMW	%	No of EMW	%	No of EMW	%
70	15.2	26	5.7	364	79.1
Total No of EMW - 460					

**FIGURE - 9**

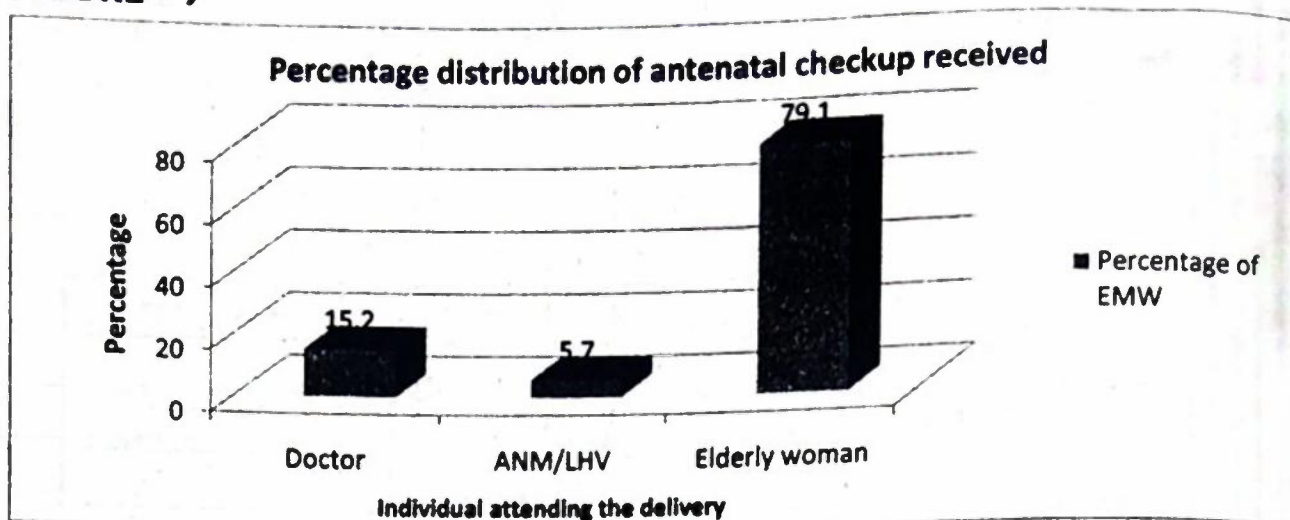


Table-9 provides information on assistance during delivery by doctors, health professionals (ANM or LHV) and elderly women. It is seen that maximum percentage of women (79.1%) are assisted by the elderly women while 5.7% receive assistance from ANM and 15.2% avail assistance from the doctors.

### Child Care

The healthy survival of the newborn baby is dependent on the health status of the mother and the feeding and weaning practices among infants which have always been an area of special interest where child rearing practices are concerned, (Srinivasan et al. 1989).

**TABLE - 10**  
**Initiation of Breastfeeding**

Initiation of Breast feeding	No of EMW	Percentage
1st day	66	14.3
2nd day	259	56.3
3rd day	78	17
No response	57	12.4
Total	460	100

**FIGURE - 10**

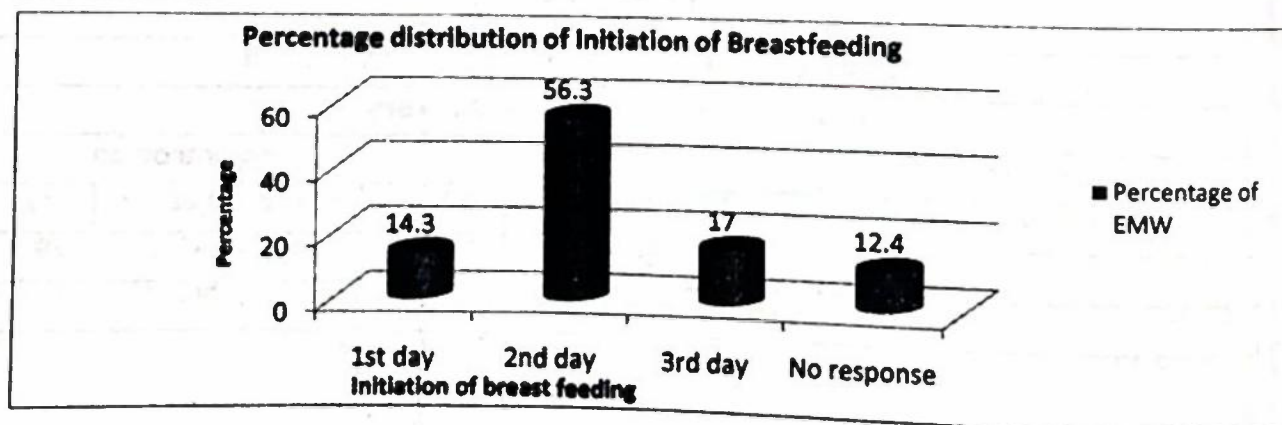


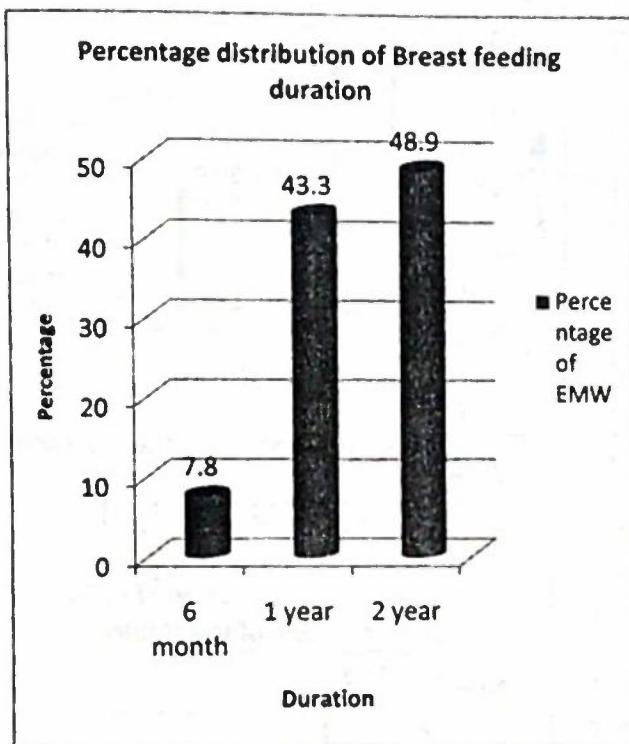


Table-10 presents the details of the initiation of breast feeding after childbirth. Maximum percentages of women (56.3%) initiate breast feeding on the second day while 14.3% of the women initiate breast feeding on the first day and 17.0% of the women initiate breast feeding on the third day. Thus the practice of discarding colostrums is prevailing in this tribe.

**TABLE - II**  
**Duration of breast feeding & Introduction of Supplementary Food**

Duration	Duration of Breast feeding		Breast feeding along with Supplementary Food	
	No of EMW	Percentage	No of EMW	Percentage
6 month	36	7.8	231	50.3
1 year	199	43.3	179	38.9
2 year	225	48.9	50	10.8
Total	460	100	460	100

**RE - II.a**



**FIGURE - II.b**

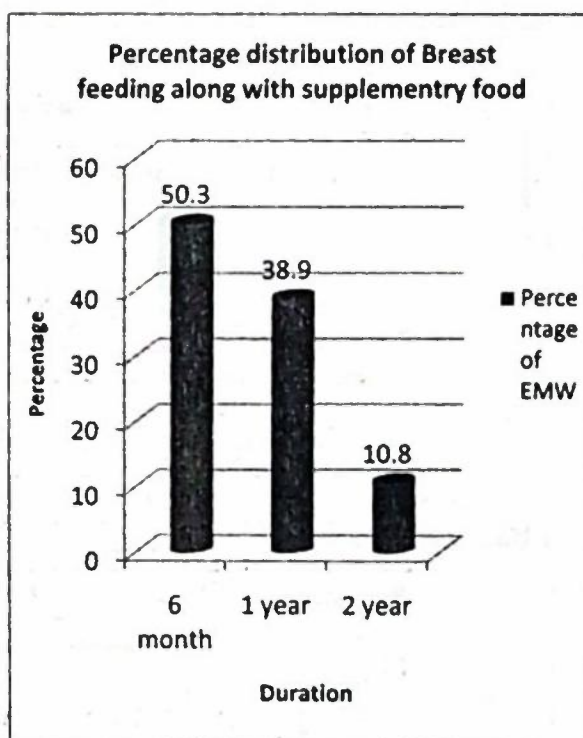


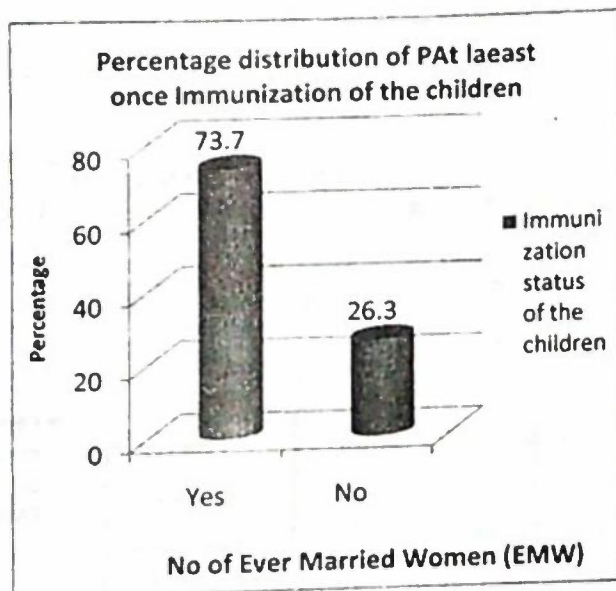
Table-II highlights the duration of breast feeding and the introduction of supplementary food. It is observed that maximum percentage of women breast feed their babies for a period of one year (43.3%) and two year (48.9%) while only 7.8% women breast feed their babies for only six months. Thus a prolonged duration of breast feeding is practiced among the Kharia women.

The introduction of supplementary food in right amount and frequency is important for appropriate infant and child feeding practices, (Vimala & Ratnaprabha 1987). It is noticed that normally the Kharia women introduce supplementary food at the age of six months (50.3%) whereas 38.9% women start supplementary feeding at the age of one year. Thus it is observed that the Kharia women introduce the supplementary food at the right age.

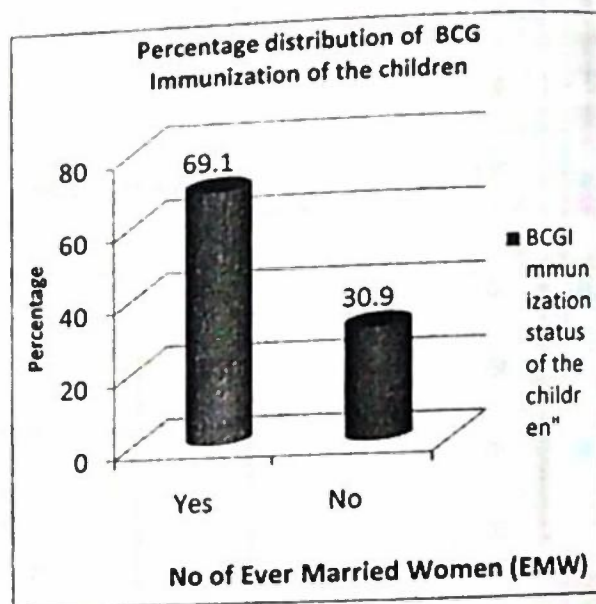
**TABLE - 12**  
Immunization status of the children

	At least one		BCG		DPT		Polio		Vit-A		Measles	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Yes	339	73.7	318	69.1	321	69.8	325	70.7	310	67.4	305	66.3
No	121	26.3	142	30.9	139	30.2	135	29.3	150	32.6	155	33.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>100</b>

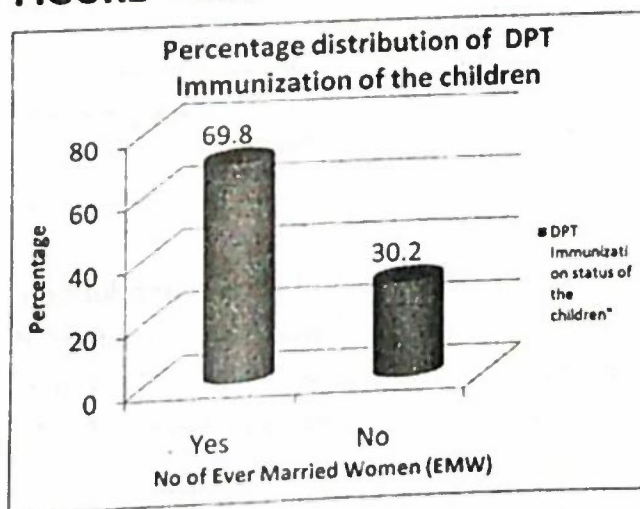
**FIGURE - 12.a**



**FIGURE - 12.b**



**FIGURE - 12.c**



**FIGURE - 12.d**

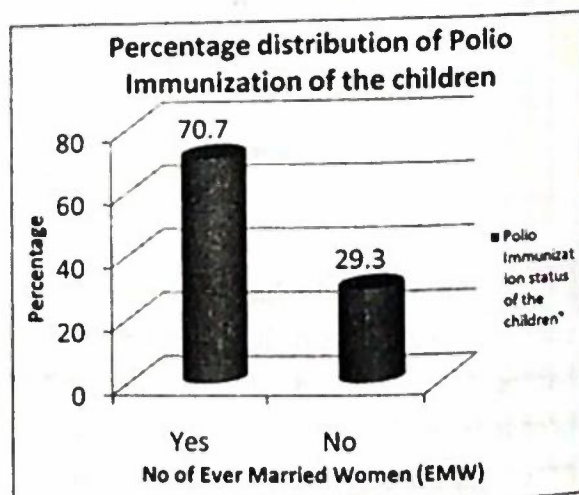




Table-12 reveals the coverage of various vaccines (BCG, DPT, Polio, Vit-A & Measles) among the children. It is noticed that 73.7% mothers immunized their children with at-least one vaccine while 26.3% mothers do not immunize their children. The table also shows that maximum percentage of mothers avail the Polio vaccine (70.7%) , BCG (69.1%) and DPT(69.8%) vaccine while 67.3% mothers give their children the Vitamin-A supplementation and Measles is received by slightly less percentage of children.

### Family Planning

The use of family planning methods is of vital importance to control the fertility of the population. Of all the methods, the permanent method or the sterilization method (Vasectomy/Tubectomy) is found to be a highly accepted method.

**TABLE - 13**  
**Family Welfare data (Permanent method)**

Method	Adopted		Not adopted	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Sterilization	255	55.4	205	44.6

**FIGURE - 13**

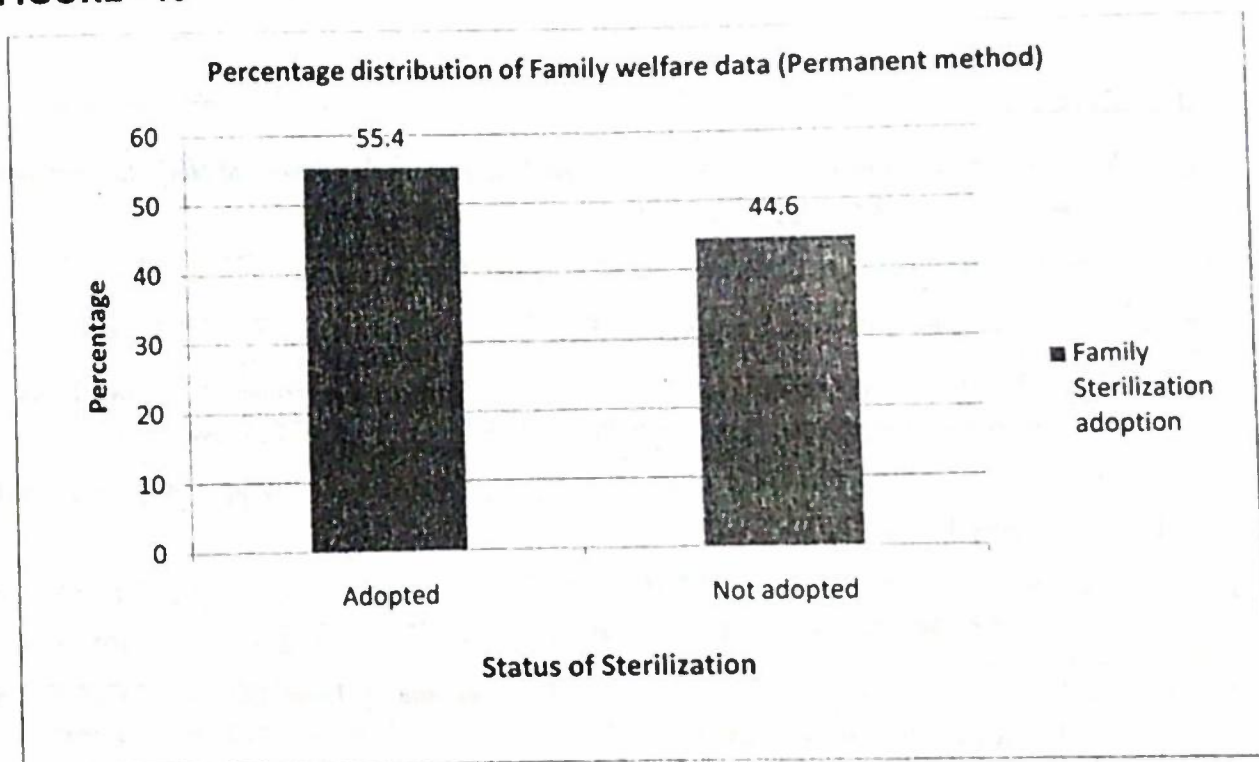


Table-13 highlights that 55.4% of the Kharias accept the permanent method (Vasectomy/Tubectomy) of fertility regulation while 44.6% of the Kharias do not adopt this terminal method. It is confirmed in the study that Kharias adopt some of their indigenous anti fertility methods for spacing as well as limiting their family size.

## Conclusion

This is an empirical attempt to study the reproductive health practices of the Hill Kharias: a PTG of north Odisha. They are sparsely distributed mostly in Maurbhanj District of Odisha. Data have been collected from 460 ever-married women of the reproductive age group (15-49 years) during 2010. The present paper deals with the actual reproductive scenario of the Kharia women. It is noticed that the Kharias are extremely poor and have a food gathering and hunting economy. The observation of fertility shows that though the mean age at marriage is slightly low (17 years), the average fertility of the women is not so high ie. 3.1 (mean conception). This community is far away from the reach of the modern family and health services provided by the government. However, it is observed that the prolonged breast feeding and the prevalence of widespread traditional contraception methods are identified as the responsible factors for affecting such a low fertility of the present population. Hence, trends of fertility need to be monitored regularly and appropriate measures should be taken to raise the socio-economic status of the Kharias and of the women in particular.

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# Health Status and Health Care Services : A Study Among The Tribal Communities of Jajpur District of Odisha

\*K.N. Dash

## ABSTRACT

Health has rightly been equated with wealth. Health as we all know is a pre-requisite for human development and is an essential component for the well-being of the common man. Importance of good health has been well recognized over time. The present paper highlights the health status and health care services prevalent among the tribal communities of Jajpur district of Odisha. Health is intimately associated with socio-cultural life of the tribal people. In fact all communities, especially tribals have their own concepts of health and diseases as a part of their culture. The tribal people have adjusted themselves with their surrounding by developing knowledge including health, disease and treatment. The study is intended to assess the general health condition of the tribals and to suggest viable measures for the improvement of the health status of the tribals in the Jajpur district of Odisha and to examine the disparities among different tribal communities with regard to access and utilization of health care services.

**Key words:** Health Status, Health Care Services, morbidity situation

## INTRODUCTION

Health is multidimensional and includes physical, psychological and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity (WHO, 1946). Hence it is perceived as a dynamic state of well being but it has not specified the level which can indicate 'complete physical, mental and social well-being'. Illness is contradiction to health and both are interlinked with each other in inverse proportions, moulding the behavioural pattern of the community.

The health is a pre-requisite for human development and is an essential component for the well-being of the common man. Importance of good health has been well recognized over time. Health may be conceived as a product of many factors and the communities contribute to share the responsibilities of its maintenance and become conscious about health and its hazards. The term 'health' is understood differently but different people developing upon the specific social, economic, cultural and political situations in which they happen to be expressed (Shankar, et al., 2012 )(1946 Preamble to the constitution of the WHO as adopted by the International Health conference, 1946).

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However, all people wish to keep themselves healthy and adopt with the changing environment. Health is a function not only of medical care but also of the overall integrated development of society –cultural, economic, educational, social and political. Hence health is intimately associated with socio-cultural life of the people. In fact all communities, especially tribals have their own concepts of health and diseases, as part of their culture. The tribal people have adjusted themselves with their surrounding by developing knowledge including health, disease and treatment. Their health is the perceptions and conceptions in their own cultural systems based on external stimuli emanating from astrological influences, witchcraft and evil spirits in the etiology of diseases, with less awareness of the modern health care and health services for health seeking behavior (Debnath,2012). Studies have shown that communities over a period of time have accumulated knowledge and have evolved a wide array of therapeutic techniques and procedures for the treatment of various diseases. Anthropological understanding of the tribal health care system can be understood on the basis of two broad dimensions: (a) health care as a system that subscribes to the functionalist and structural functionalist paradigm and (b) changes that are evident in the health seeking behaviour of the tribes in the light of their contact with modern medical systems. A holistic understanding of the tribal health and tribal health care system can only be achieved in the light of the above two dimensions. To understand the tribal health, it is imperative to understand the interface between traditional and modern health care system.

## **HEALTH STATUS OF THE TRIBES OF ODISHA**

There are 62 tribal communities including 13 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PTGs) with a population of 8.15 million constituting 22.3 % of state population (2001 Census).The tribal population in Odisha has distinct health problems which are mainly governed by their habitat, difficult geographical terrain and ecological variable niches. The situational analysis of health indices of tribal communities of Odisha is worse than the national average: infant mortality rate 84.2; under-five mortality rate 126.6; children under weight 55.9; anemia in children 79.8; children with an acute respiratory infection 22.4; children with recent diarrhea 21.1; women with anemia 64.9 per 1000.The tribal population of Odisha mostly suffer from malaria, tuberculosis, genetic disorder, sickle cell anemia and nutritional deficiency diseases.

(Bulliya, 2006) found the Pauri Bhuiyans are highly disease prone because of hostile environment and poor health care facilities. Iron deficiency anemia is highly prevalent among the Pauri Bhuiyans with low concentration of blood hemoglobin (Hb). The primitive tribal groups such as the Kutia Kondhs and the Pauri Bhuiyans are very much backward with respect to health and sanitation (Ali, 1983).The high incidence of malnutrition is also found in tribal dominated district of Odisha for which the growth of children get stunted and become easily susceptible to disease. Malaria is the most important public health problem among the tribes of Odisha and it contributes 50% of malaria death in the country.

The respiratory disease is commonly found among the tribes which account for a high infant mortality due to inadequate vaccination and lack of early diagnosis and prevention. Skin diseases such as scabies are found in high proportion among the Bonda, Juang and Kutia Kondh due to overcrowding, unhygienic living conditions and lack of health awareness. Water-borne communicable diseases like gastro-intestinal disorders including acute diarrhoea are commonly prevalent among the tribes of Odisha. A study by Bag, et al., 2007 on the Kondhs of Odisha reveals the following diseases in this order: malaria fever (31.33%); cough (21.15%); dysentery (9.14%); headache (8.09%); smallpox (5.22%); typhoid (4.43%); dental pain (3.92%); sore eyes (3.66%); scabies (3.39%) and other minor ailments. The sexually transmitted diseases like yaws and syphilis also occur among the tribes of Odisha. Genetic disorders are gaining predominance and have profound health implications in morbidity status of the tribals in Odisha. (Balgir, 2005)

## STUDY AREA

The Jajpur district is located in the eastern region of Odisha and extends from 85° 40' east longitude to 86° 44' east longitude and from 20° 43' north latitude to 21° 10' north latitude covering an area of 2887.69 sq. kms. The total forest area is 7111 hectares. Jajpur district lies 33m above the sea level and enjoys a temperate climate. The district is famous for rich mineral content like iron and chromite. The total tribal population in the district is 1,25,989 in number out of which males are 64,198 and female are 61,719. The tribal people constitute 7.76% of total population of the district. The four major tribes are Mundas, Shabars, Kolhas and Hos who are 35685, 31840, 18569 and 7123 numbers respectively. In this district four MADA pockets are operating for the development of the tribals. 41.56% of the Munda, the highest and 18.53% of the Shabars, the lowest are engaged as labourer in mines and industries of this district. The sex ratio is highest among the Kolhas (972) and lowest among the Mundas (904). The literacy rate 37.26% is highest among Mundas and 28.68%, the lowest among the Kolhas of the Jajpur district of Odisha.

**Table 1: Socio-economic profile of villages of Four tribal communities: Shabar, Munda, Kolha and Ho**

Socio Demographic Data of the Sample Village	Shabar	Munda	Kolha	Ho
Name	Ranibandhi, Khandiabandhi	Bahalisahi, Khandara	Balligotha, Balagia	Sahapur, Barabanki
Total Household	62	65	54	52
Total Tribal Population	313(100%)	320(100%)	288(100%)	244(100%)
Total Tribal Males	163(52.07%)	168(52.5%)	146(50.69%)	133(54.50%)
Total Tribal Females	150(47.92%)	152(47.5%)	142(49.30%)	121(49.59%)
Sex-Ratio	920	904	972	909
Literacy Rate	37.26%	32.75%	28.68%	33.46%
Industrial Labourer Occupation	18.53%	41.56%	36.86%	27.72%



## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The study is intended

- 1) To assess the general health condition of the tribals and to suggest viable measures for the improvement of the health status of the tribals in the Jajpur district of Odisha.
- 2) To examine the disparities among different tribal communities with regard to access and utilization of health care services.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study was conducted using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods and techniques. The study is based on participant observation method with first-hand information collected in 8 villages, two each from Shabar, Munda, Kolha and Ho tribal communities of Jajpur district of Odisha. Besides using observation method, a structured interview schedule has also been used deliberately to achieve reliability and to study the health issues more intensely. Informal interviews were conducted with local medicinemen, doctors and paramedical staff to collect data on all aspects of primary health care.

The findings of the study is based on primary data which have been collected from total 233 households; 62 from Shabars, 65 from Munda, 54 from Kolha and 52 from Ho tribal communities. The villages were selected purposely on the basis of concentration of tribal population. Data has been collected from a total number of 1175 respondents (610 male and 565 female) and information collected was supplemented with data from secondary sources.

## **MORBIDITY SITUATION IN THE TRIBAL COMMUNITIES**

It is generally noticed that the morbidity rate among the tribals is significantly higher in Jajpur district than other neighbouring districts of Odisha. To be specific, the diseases from which the tribals suffer are malaria, gastro-intestinal disorders, fever, skin diseases, nutritional deficiency disorders etc. The principal causes of morbidity are: a) infective and parasitic diseases b) malnutrition c) non-communicable diseases and d) diseases associated with genetic disorder. While acute ailment is responsible for high morbidity prevalence among the children, chronic ailment has caused the rise in morbidity prevalence among the elderly people and affected their nutritional status. In comparison to the females, the health condition of the tribal males is worse. Most of them suffer from diseases like chronic malaria, sexually transmitted diseases, anaemia, tuberculosis and scabies etc. The tribes have low nutritional status (10.09%). In the present study unspecified fever was reported highest in number (27.13%) among all the major tribe communities in the district. Next to it, the malaria occupies the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest position (12.76%) among all the diseases due to active transmission of the malaria pathogens. Gastro-intestinal disorders especially diarrhoea cases were encountered by 12.76% of the tribal people in the district. Skin



diseases especially scabies were found up to 6.95% which indicate unhygienic health practices among the tribals in the district. All other diseases were found in less proportion in comparison to fever, gastro-intestinal disorders, malaria, and skin diseases in the study population. But interestingly high prevalence of above diseases was found among the Ho community in comparison to other tribal communities in the Jajpur district (Table 2).

The distribution of insecticide impregnated mosquito nets distributed by Tata Steel reduced the incidences of malaria in the district. Resistance to chloroquine in Plasmodium falciparum (Pf) was found to be widespread among the tribals of the district. The causes of occurrence of various diseases are due to illiteracy, poverty, superstitious beliefs, unhygienic habitation, impure water supply, poor sanitation coupled with inadequate modern health care services in the study area.

**Table 2: Incidences of major diseases among major tribes of Jajpur district**

Sl. No	Name of the diseases	Name of the Tribal Communities								Total	
		Shabar		Munda		Kolha		Ho		No.	%
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
1.	Fever	105	24.76	112	28.07	97	27.7	92	28.48	406	27.13
2	Gastro-intestinal disorders	48	11.32	41	10.27	37	10.57	35	10.83	161	10.46
3	Malaria	52	12.26	48	12.03	46	13.14	45	13.93	191	12.76
4	Skin Diseases	31	7.31	26	6.51	24	6.85	23	7.12	104	6.95
5	Eye Infection	18	4.24	15	3.75	14	4.0	12	3.71	59	3.94
6	ENT Diseases	15	3.53	13	3.25	12	3.42	10	3.09	50	3.34
7	Dental Diseases	14	3.30	12	3.00	10	2.85	08	2.47	37	2.47
8	Joint Pain	13	3.06	11	2.75	08	2.28	06	1.85	38	2.54
9	Nutritional Deficiency Disorders (Anaemia)	42	9.90	38	9.52	36	10.28	35	10.83	151	10.09
10	Respiratory Disorder	14	3.30	13	3.25	12	3.42	12	3.71	51	3.40
11	Circulatory Disorder	05	1.17	07	1.75	06	1.71	04	1.23	22	1.47
12	Tuberculosis	14	3.30	12	3.00	08	2.28	06	1.85	40	2.67
13	Lymphatic Filariasis	18	4.71	14	3.50	11	3.13	10	3.08	53	3.54
14	Jaundice	03	0.70	02	0.50	01	0.28	01	0.30	07	0.46
15	Others	32	7.57	36	9.02	28	8.0	24	7.43	120	8.02
	Total	424	28.34	399	23.39	350	23.28	323	21.59	1496	100

### ACCESSIBILITY OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Accessibility of health care services is considered important in determining the health condition of the tribals. It was ascertained from the respondents whether the medical services were easily available to them and where did they take their patients for

treatment of different ailments. It was found that 27% of the total number of the tribal households perceived that the modern medical services were easily accessible, whereas 72.96% of the tribal households perceived that modern medical services were not easily available. This clearly brings out a poor state of medical facilities in the district. 54.50% of the total tribal households still prefer the tribal medicine man. But surprisingly it was also found that only 19.35 % of Shabar households, the lowest among the tribals, accessed the indigenous tribal medicine through medicine man while 70.76% of Munda households, the highest among the tribals, had accessed the tribal medicine man. On the other hand, 67.74% of the Shabars had the choice of government hospitals/PHC's/dispensaries/sub-centers for the treatment of diseases and only 16.92% of the Munda households preferred the government hospitals/PHC's/dispensaries/sub-centers for the treatment of diseases. Only 6% of the total tribal households received treatment from private doctor/clinic/hospital and that too only for serious diseases. The first choice for treatment of general ailment was occult prescription of traditional medicine man among the Munda, Kolha and the Ho population (Table -3).The patients were taken to government hospitals/PHCs/dispensaries or to private doctor/clinic only in case of serious ailments for treatment. This is due to strong cultural beliefs in favour of their traditional medicine in one hand and in the other hand, due to poor economic condition of the tribals. The major cause being the tribes residing away from government hospitals/PHCs in the interior areas which means absence of modern health management institutions has also encouraged tribals to depend on traditional medicines especially magico-religious and herbal healers of their villages.

**Table 3: Percent distribution of the Households according to the type of health care facilities available**

Sl. No	Name of the diseases	Name of the Tribal Communities								Total	
		Shabar		Munda		Kolha		Ho		No.	%
		No	%	No	%	No.	%	No	%		
A	Easy Accessibility										
i)	Yes	16	25.80	18	27.69	15	27.77	13	25.00	63	27.00
ii)	No	46	74.19	47	72.30	39	72.22	38	75.00	170	72.96
B	Access to types of Health Care Facilities										
i)	Govt. Hospitals/ PHC/ Dispensary/ SubCenter	42	67.74	11	16.92	10	18.51	13	25.00	76	32.61
ii)	Private Hospital/ Clinic/ Doctor	03	4.83	04	6.15	04	7.40	03	5.76	14	6.00
iii)	Para-medical staff of the government	02	3.22	01	1.53	02	3.70	01	1.92	06	2.57
iv)	Medicineman (Traditional healer)	12	19.35	46	70.76	36	66.66	33	63.46	127	54.50
v)	Others	03	4.83	03	4.61	02	3.70	01	1.92	09	3.86



But due to the acculturation under the impact of modernization and availability of modern health care facilities in the vicinity, the Shabars of Jajpur district have started to avail the modern health care services to cure diseases in more numbers than other major tribes of the district. In spite of the so called expansion of the health care facilities and government effort to improve health situation of the tribals, hardly any significant impact on the important health indices of the tribal people has been made. Location of the modern facilities should be as per local needs depending on geographical and population consideration, resources and manpower availability so that accessibility of modern health care services will more gradually be acceptable by the tribal communities.

## PREFERENCE OF VARIOUS MEDICAL SYSTEMS

The study revealed that the majority of the tribal people prefer the indigenous methods of treatment. 54.50% of total tribal households prefer indigenous method of treatment. Among the four major tribal communities, only 19.5% of the Shabars, the lowest among the tribals used to go for indigenous method of treatment and 70.76% of the Munda, the highest among the tribals preferred indigenous method of treatment. Similarly the modern bio-medicine method was followed by 75.80% of the Shabars, the highest among the tribal population in the district and 24.61% of the Munda, the lowest among the tribal population in the district preferred the modern medicine system. All the major tribes preferred other systems of medicine in very negligible proportion in the district (Table-4). In comparison to the past, in spite of the presence of traditional medicine man, tribal's dependence on modern health care management institutions like Primary Health Center (PHC) and community health center (CHC), operating at the block level has tremendously increased during the last few years due to industrialization of the district. Wide spread poverty and illiteracy contribute towards higher preference to the indigenous method of treatment than the modern bio-medicine system.

**Table – 4: Tribe wise Preference of Various Medical Systems in Jajpur District**

Sl. No.	Name of the tribe	Households prefer indigenous medicine		Households prefer modern medicine		Households prefer other medicines		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Munda	46	70.76	16	24.61	03	4.61	65	27.89
2	Kolha	36	66.66	16	29.62	02	3.70	54	23.17
3	Ho	33	63.46	18	34.61	01	1.92	52	22.31
4	Shabar	12	19.50	47	75.80	03	4.83	62	26.60
	Total	127	54.50	97	41.63	09	13.73	233	100



## CONCLUSION

The tribals of the Jajpur district are severely burdened with diseases. Both the communicable and non-communicable diseases are frequently found among them in spite of the impressive expansion of the modern health care facilities. The health status of the tribal population has not improved along the desired lines. They are still practising their traditional medicine to cure the diseases. The health care delivery services are still poor and need to be strengthened in order to achieve the goal of health for all in the country. It is very clear from the study that there is an urgent need to create awareness, sensitization and capacity among the tribals to curb the health related problems. Indigenous systems of health care and indigenous practitioners should be incorporated in the health care planning and programmes to achieve the desired goal. Community participation, mutual interaction between the service providers and the beneficiaries is extremely essential for the success of development programmes related to health among the tribal communities. Geographical accessibility, awareness and affordability to modern health care practices must be improved in the tribal areas to achieve the target in the field of development of health.

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# Tribal Women Participation in Watershed Development Programme: A Case Study from Western Odisha

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*\*\*Niharranjan Mishra*

## ABSTRACT

Equal share by all the men and women in governance of Common Property Resources (CPRs) is one of the features of neo-liberal environmental policy era. CPRs refer to non-exclusive resources, whose right of accessibility is open to a number of owners. Watershed can be considered as a common property resource, it is implemented by the Government of India (GOI) and other agencies, mainly to deal with the problem of runoff, soil degradation and to improve the productivity of dry land agriculture. The present study is carried out at Asurmunda Watershed, present in Agalpur block of Bolangir district in western Odisha. Taking some sociological methodologies like Focus Group Discussion (FGDs), observation and interview into account the present paper has tried to explore the problems in women participation in watershed in Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Castes women groups in particular. Apart from this the paper has also tried to examine the tribal women participation in different phases of implementation of watershed. The findings of the study support the idea the Watershed Committee (WC) and User Groups (UGs) created during the watershed are mainly dominated by male members of the village.

**Key words:** Watershed, CPRs, Livelihoods, Community Participation, SHGs

## INTRODUCTION

Common pool resources are also called as common property resources; it could be either created by man or by natural processes (e.g. an irrigation system or fishing grounds etc.). There is difference between open access and common property resources: in open access property resources nobody has the legal rights to exclude anyone from using the resources. And in common property resources, there are defined groups who have legal all water drains to a common point. Watershed is an attractive unit for technical development to manage water and soil for production and conservation of natural resources (Kerr, 2002).

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Watershed Development Programme has a significant impact on the agricultural income, non-agricultural income, employment, forestry activities, cropping pattern, production and productivity of different crops. Watershed Development Programme (WSDP) is one of the most important policy initiatives in the post nineties, to address the issue of generating natural resources and enhancement of rural livelihoods, especially in dry areas (Shah, Joshi and Jayaram Desai, 2009). Watershed development programmes are being supported by the Central Government, State Governments, World Bank, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and other external agencies, (Kerr, 2002). Watershed Development strategy improves the productivity of land and other natural resources. It is considered as the best means of CPRs along with the other land and rural development programmes. The role of local communities in the management of natural resources has been systematically reduced with increasing interference of the state, as the policy formulation and operational functions were delegated to the state employees. But in the era of globalization, the State is challenged by international corporations, and by citizens and communities. To deal with these new challenges, the State has often seen 'participation' as input in mediating conflicts and relationships between its own administration, civil society and the private sector (Pimbert, 2004).

Therefore more emphasis has been placed on the participatory approaches in natural resource management and more particularly on watershed management development programmes. Indian watershed projects started in the 1970s and 1980s with technocratic approach that failed to recognize the need to address the challenges faced by the watershed projects. Subsequently, in 1990s, projects included participatory approach that focuses more on social organization, but results remained vague (Kerr, 2007). Subsequently, many committees have been set up to review the working progress of watershed programmes in India from time to time and they have recommended some important guidelines to carry out watershed projects more successfully. These guidelines are Watershed Guidelines (1995), Watershed Guidelines (2001), Hariyali Guidelines (2003) and Watershed Guidelines (2008). It was also included in these guidelines that watershed management should be carried out by adopting community participatory and integrated approach. Watershed is found to be effective for agricultural productivity, especially for dry land agricultural growth, poverty eradication, livelihood and sustainable development in many parts of India. And the success and sustainability of watershed programmes is highly influenced by collective action and community participation.

India has implemented watershed approach for development of rain-fed areas. But expectations from watershed are not up to the mark, because it is found that 66% of watershed programme is performing below average. On the other hand, comprehensive assessment of watershed programmes in India has shown that community watersheds should be adopted not only for the improvement of soil and water conservation but also it needs to be holistic and completely addressing equity in gender issues (Wani and Sreedevi, 2009). Women and men are involved in watershed management. Though women are taking



part in managing and protecting the watershed and environment, it is not recognized in terms of ownership. The migration of male members from village to town sometimes forces rural women to manage the natural resources. Women constitute more than 50% of the world population who can play a significant role in watershed management. They support the watershed programmes, individually or in groups; at domestic or community levels. The activities undertaken for women in watershed development projects do not empower them to be equal partners with men (Pangare, 1998).

Generally women participation is less in Watershed Development Programmes (WSDPs), but tribal women and Scheduled Caste women are more marginalised. The paper emphasizes that unless the women actively involved in the central role of decision making process, the long term sustainability of the watershed development cannot be achieved. Hence, an effort to empower women through the process of watershed development has taken into consideration. Believing women as an integral member of communities the present paper describes the progress from the perspective of women to the development activities in general and watershed development in particular. The Present paper is based on both primary and secondary resources and general perception regarding women participation in watershed management.

The present study is carried out at Asurmunda Watershed, present in Agalpur block of Bolangir district in Western Odisha. The study attempts to examine the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) women participation in Watershed Development Programme (WSDP) and its impact on the livelihoods in the study area. The paper is divided into three parts. The first part deals with background of the paper, its objectives and methodologies. In the second part, the type of participation under real field condition has been discussed. The third part discusses the institutional arrangements and women participation in watershed with its related problems and conclusion. Some suggestions have also been given in the paper to implement the watershed programme more successfully.

## I

### **WOMEN GOVERNANCE IN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGMENT**

Governance is the activity of governing. It relates to decisions that define expectations, grant power or verify performance. It consists either of a separate process or of a specific part of management or leadership processes. Sincere efforts are going on to involve women in watershed development programmes. But if there is any women involvement in the project, it is only meant for official record keeping. Moreover, in the decision making process, more importance is given to the male members of the family in place of women. Although the goal of gender equality provides strong grounds for enhancing women's presence in institutions of natural resource governance, there is rather little knowledge about the impact of their presence on outcomes. (Agarwal, 2010)

## **Women Participation in Watershed Management**

The participation in development programmes between men and women is not equal. The burden of the development has fallen disproportionately on women in comparison with men. Interventions such as irrigation and other technological improvements have habitually failed to take into consideration the existing imbalance between men and women's ownership rights, division of labour and incomes. Efforts are being made to change the status-quo by forming women self-help groups, which have remained fairly autonomous regarding savings initiatives with no direct link to watershed management. Moreover all women do not have access to such groups and organizations. Their vulnerability further increases in the absence of any communication with the outside world (Arya and Samra, 2007). The most vital objective of the watershed development is to increase the land productivity. So the farmers are the first who are attracted and involved in the process to form the village level watershed committee core. Women are nominated to take part in this process only for making records as token. On the other side, we can definitely find many productive activities are being carried out by the women participants. Moreover women are also attached to more subsistence level of the whole agro-process. In nearly all rice growing areas of Asia, men traditionally perform such activities as land preparation, ploughing, irrigation and levelling of the fields. However sowing, transplanting, weeding and crop processing are usually women's work (Rwelamira, 1999).

## **Importance of Gender Participation in Watershed Management**

Women participation is very significant in watershed programmes because in rural areas, a tribal woman activity chiefly depends on managing the common pool resources i.e., from collecting fuel to preparing food, water, fuel and fodder. Those resources provide the livelihood option to women like as rope making, basket making, leaf plate making and *kendu* leaves collection. Women are using customary methods and it has been effective in conserving soil fertility. They practice crop rotation, inter-cropping and a variety of other soil conservation and enhancement techniques. Owing to the nature of dependency and necessity, tribal women have developed practices for the efficient and sustainable use of the existing resources available to them. Responsibility of household work sometimes deprives women to contribute in the process of natural resources governance. Customary obligations have reduced the level of women participation in usual governance. Women are traditionally obliged to follow expected social norms. This increases the rate of environmental degradation and deprives them of their livelihoods. Under the above background the western Odisha gives the immense scope to study the tribal women participation in watershed and the impact of watershed on livelihoods. Odisha is one of the least developed states in India and majority of its rural and tribal population are poor but Odisha is rich in natural resources. In studied area almost all women groups belong to either STs or SCs Communities.



## **WATERSHED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IN ODISHA**

The Government of Odisha has implemented various schemes for the small and marginal farmers in rain-fed areas to improve agricultural productivity. Among such schemes, Integrated Watershed Development Projects (IWDP) is one of them. The Department of Agriculture, through Odisha Watershed Development Mission has been carrying out different centrally sponsored as well as externally aided watershed programmes mainly in the rain-fed areas. The primary objective of Integrated Watershed Management Project is to reduce rural poverty through various agricultural and horticultural activities. Odisha Watershed Development Mission was established in the year (2000) as a registered society. The Mission is responsible for the coordination and implementation of various centrally sponsored schemes in the entire State. From the year 2000-2001, the mission has been emphasizing on Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools and techniques following building block approach to promote community participation in planning and implementation of watershed programmes. Though Watershed was introduced in the second five year planning, two line departments such as forest and agriculture were involved in the process of work implementation. The works were executed through the department field staff and "single line approach". No approach of people's participation was adopted till the beginning of eighth five year plan period. During the period, three projects namely Integrated Watershed Development Projects (NWDP), National Watershed Development Project for rain-fed areas (NWDPA) and Indo-Danish Comprehensive Watershed Development Project (DDCWDP) were launched in Orissa (Das, 2006).

### **The Study Area**

The present study has been carried out in Asurmunda Watershed, situated in the Asurmunda village; Agalpur Block of Bolangir district. It is a part of Western Odisha Rural Livelihoods Projects (WORLP), scheme operational in Western Odisha since 2001. Total area of the studied watershed is 506 hectare; out of which 25.40 hectare, 48 hectare; and 76.62 lands belong to up land, medium land and low land. Apart from this, total treatable area is 194 hectare, similarly cultivable waste land, non cultivable waste land, pasture land and village forest land are; 45 hectare, 70 hectare, 30.46 hectare and 45.20 hectare. In Asurmunda village total number of household is approximately 73 and total population is nearly 414. Majority of the families in this village are SCs, STs and OBCs. While the total number of females is 217 from all categories, SCs, STs, OBCs, and General, total number of male member is 230. Duration of this watershed project is from the year 2005 to 2010. It is located in Salebhata and it comes under Banki Gram Panchayat area. It is 12 K.M. away from the block headquarters. The Total Geographical Area of the village is 506 hectare out of which total treatable area is 194 hectare. The project was out by the NGO, Sabuja Biplav (Project Implementing Agency) and the District Watershed Mission, Bolangir has been designated as the District Nodal Agency. It is the 9th biggest district in Odisha. Bolangir was established as the headquarters of the princely state of Patna by Balaram Deo in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The states of Patna and Sonepur were merged with Odisha in 1948.

And jointly they formed the district of Bolangir. Generally Bolangir has a dry and hot central table-land climate with insufficient rainfall. It mainly has uplands and its major soil type is acidic red, with some patches of black soil. The groundwater level here is low.

This district is regarded as the largest contributor to the non-timber forest produce trade in Odisha. Land distribution is not equal in Bolangir. It is dominated by big farmers, because 30 per cent of the big farmers own 70 per cent of the agricultural land; remaining land is owned by small and marginal farmers. The nature of uncertain rainfall leads to repeated droughts. The district faces many socio-economic problems. The human, natural and physical loss is very high here and is characterised by high starvation deaths, perpetual indebtedness to exploitative money lenders, massive crop loss, land alienation, and irreparable damage to the forest resources. In this regard the role of watershed is very important to improve the life conditions of the poor people. Western Orissa Rural Livelihoods Project (WORLP) deals with the issue of poverty in Bargarh, Bolangir, Kalahandi and Nuapada districts.

### **Data Collection and Data Analysis**

Random sampling procedure has been followed in the study. Interview and Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) was done with women groups belonging to different social category. To examine the women participation in watershed, both primary and secondary information has been collected. Secondary information and interview with PIA was also done to collect the relevant information. Data is analysed by using both the qualitative and quantitative techniques.

### **Objectives of the study**

- To check the SCs STs; women participation in watershed in different phases of implementation.
- The paper has studied the problems of women participation in watershed programme

## **II**

Seven types of people's participation given by Pretty (1994), Sattethwaite (1995), Adnan, Brustnow (1992) and Hart (1992), (cited in Pretty 1995), has been taken into consideration in the study to evaluate the SC and ST women participation in Asurmunda watershed area.

### **Manipulative participation**

In this type of participation, people do not participate effectively; they do not exercise any power to influence the process of decision-making. Here, beneficiaries participate for the sake of participation only. In the real field situation it was found that women groups do not have effective voice in decision-making in watershed implementation. During the focus group discussions with the women groups, it was found



that monthly meetings were held in the village. And many women had attended the meeting only for the sake of membership.

### **Passive participation**

In the studied village it was found that in the selection of watershed secretary for the village watershed meetings, there was no active participation of women groups. Many of the tribal (50%) and Schedule Caste farmers (60%) and women groups (70%) were not at all aware of the election and meetings. However, big farmers and literate villagers, mostly belonging to general categories (70%) in the study area only knew about the election. The election was held once in three years. In the meetings, majority of the villagers and women groups were only listeners. The reasons for non-representation of all social categories were due to nothing but ignorance.

### **Participation by consultation**

In the unstructured interview with the key informants such as village Sarpanch, SHGs members, Aganwadi members etc regarding SCs and STs, women's consultation for implementing the watershed, most of the key informants (80%) were of the opinion that Planning Implementing Agency (PIA) has consulted them regarding water and fuel problems but was not concerned about their personal problems. They were mainly asked about water, health and livelihood related problems. Only few suggestions have been taken into consideration by PIA, other poor and landless farmers have complained that they were not consulted. Watershed Committee (WC) was formed with the involvement of villagers with disproportionate representation from various social categories; it was more from high caste and upper class households (70%).

### **Participation for material incentives**

In the FGD with the women groups, it was found that 95% of them have contributed their labour during the cleaning of village roads and labour works in watershed activities. In return they received cash money and during this period they did not venture into any work for daily wage earning (for example collecting of *saal* leaves from forest). Although daily wage labour incentive encourages them for participation during watershed programme, it also poses the question of sustainability in the post project period both in terms of their livelihoods and participation.

### **Functional participation**

In this type of participation, people may participate through groups to meet the objectives set by the external agencies. This type of participation was not seen in the studied area. Because, as per the observation of the villager's, watershed Users Groups (UGs), SHGs, and watershed committee created during the implementation of watershed were not functional in post project period (65%). Further these groups are not very much self-regulated after the completion of the project.

## Interactive participation

In the studied area, interaction between women groups and PIA was taking place mainly in the form of village meeting, election of watershed secretary and SHGs meetings. It was informed by the most of women that they never approached the PIA for any of their personal problems. During the structured interview (Table No. 1) with the women groups, it was found that majority of them (nearly 50%) were listeners in the meeting. However, 11% of them participated in the discussion taking place in watershed meeting. And very few (14.74%) gave some suggestions regarding the watershed activities. Remaining (23.96%) have only attended the meeting; they were unaware of what was happening in the meeting. The reason behind this is that they were ignorant of the watershed programme and also felt marginalized. They revealed that mainly male members of their family speak in the meeting.

**Table. 1: Types of interaction in meetings between PIA and women groups**

Types of role of women in the meetings	Community/Caste of the Respondent				Total	%
	SC <sup>1</sup>	ST <sup>2</sup>	OBC <sup>3</sup>	GC <sup>4</sup>		
Participated in discussion	8	04	10	3	25	11.53
Listener	30	15	60	3	108	49.76
Gave suggestions	5	3	20	4	32	14.74
Only attended, did not listen	20	8	22	2	52	23.96
Total	63	30	112	12	217	100

(Data gathered during FGDs with women groups)

**Table. 2: Reason for attending the meetings (all respondents are women)**

Reasons for attended the WS meetings	Community of the Respondent				Total	%
	SC	ST	OBC	GC		
To accompany friend/ relatives	10	4	10	2	26	11.98
Village leader called	8	3	15	2	28	12.90
Officials called	7	3	10	1	21	9.67
Engaged in domestic work	18	7	27	2	54	24.88
Free food	15	10	40	3	68	31.33
To know detail about WS	5	3	10	2	20	9.21
Total	63	30	112	12	217	100

(Data gathered during FGDs with women groups)

<sup>1</sup> Total number of SC Women in village-63

<sup>2</sup> Total number of ST Women in village -30

<sup>3</sup> Total number of OBC Women in village -112

<sup>4</sup> Total number of GC Women in village-12



Among various reasons given by the respondent to attend the meeting (Table No.2), provision of free for the participants on the day of meeting played a major role (31.33%). Many of the women did not attend the meeting because of their engagement in domestic chores (24.88%). Another important factor which forces them to attend the watershed meeting is to accompany their friends or relatives (11.98%), it could be because of strong social solidarity or competition. Apart from these, some of the women have attended the meeting because village leaders (12.90%) and officials (9.67%) called them. A small portion of the women (9.20%) in the village attended the meeting to know about the watershed.

### Self-mobilization

In this type of participation people take initiatives to change the system. Though people take help from external agencies for technical and other advices, they maintain control over how resources are used. But as per information given by the respondents, the process of self-mobilization in their village was very slow; because, for any initiation or resource use they were mainly dependent on the PIA. Even after the completion of the watershed, very few women are aware of watershed activities. Table.3; below shows the gender-wise awareness regarding watershed activities.

**Table.3: Gender-wise watershed awareness**

Caste of the respondent	Gender of the respondent		Total
	Male	Female	
SC	30	10	40
ST	20	6	26
OBS	80	20	100
GC	5	3	8
Total	135	39	174

In comparison to men, the awareness level of women members is very low. Majority of the women during interview informed that, mainly male members of their family attend the meetings and watershed elections which is the reason they are not very much aware of the watershed activities.

### III

## WOMEN PARTICIPATION AND INTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS IN WATERSHED PROGRAMME

Despite of formulating good provisions in watershed guidelines for the participation of women, marginalised and landless people, the involvement of all these groups is not up to the mark in the Asurmunda watershed. In the study area male members are main decision makers in the house as well as in the watershed meetings, which is a typical

characteristic of Indian rural village. But it was also found that women are not totally financially dependent on men. In a large number of the households, women collect *saal* leaves and make disposable plates out of it, apart from this they also collect some medicinal herbs and timbers and sell them in the markets. Though women play an important role making life easier, their representation is not equal with men in Asurmunda Watershed Development Committee (WDC). Table below (Table.4) gives the representation of women from different social categories in the committee, which shows that out of twelve members only two women members (OBC, SC) are there in committee and no tribal and general category women are members in WDC.

**Table. 4: Gender-wise members in Watershed Development Committee (WDC)**

Name of the member	Designation	Male/ Female	Caste	Farm Category	Qualification
Dasarathi Bag	President	M	SC	Marginal	10 <sup>th</sup>
Aditya Pr. Das	Secretary	M	Gen	Marginal	B.A
Sarat Biswal	Member	M	OBC	Landless	8 <sup>th</sup>
Kulamani Padhan	Member	M	OBC	Landless	9 <sup>th</sup>
Dukhishyam Bag	Member	M	SC	Landless	9 <sup>th</sup>
Santosini Padhan	Member	F	OBC	Marginal	7 <sup>th</sup>
Samari Bag	Member	F	SC	Marginal	7 <sup>th</sup>
Suresh Padhan	Member	M	OBC	Landless	7 <sup>th</sup>
Trinath Padhan	Member	M	OBC	Marginal	8 <sup>th</sup>
Ranka Bariha	Member	M	ST	Marginal	5 <sup>th</sup>
Sitaram Bariha	Member	M	ST	Marginal	5 <sup>th</sup>
Harischandra Bag	Member	M	ST	Landless	7 <sup>th</sup>

**(Data gathered from PIA)**

Similarly in User Groups, the female membership is very low, most of women participants have stated that, water sharing, awareness about cropping pattern, land development activities. These activities are related to agricultural practices and agricultural works which are mainly done by the male members. Though they help in agricultural tasks, their contribution is not recognised fully. That is why male membership is high in both WCs and UGs. Apart from this, women are also restricted by social obligations and household works, which deprives them from the participation. Table; 5, reveals that though nine UGs were formed during the watershed, no woman has membership in any of the User Group.



**Table 5: Gender-wise membership in User Groups (UGs)**

Name of the User Group	Activity (*WHS)	Total Member Enrolled					**WDF Contributed
		Male			Female	Total	
		SC	ST	OBC	SC, ST & OBC	SC, ST & OBC	
Nuamunda	Old WHS	0	8	4	Nil	12	7570
Gandamunda	New WHS	4	0	8	Nil	12	4000
Padhanmunda (A)	New WHS	0	0	9	Nil	9	2000
Padhanmunda(B)	New WHS	0	0	10	Nil	10	4000
Belbahali munda	New WHS	11	0	0	Nil	11	2000
Ghudakhalmunda	New WHS	0	0	4	Nil	4	15000
Jamadarmunda	New WHS	8	0	0	Nil	8	7400
Tali Bandh	New WHS	0	0	10	Nil	10	4000
Bandhbahalimunda	New WHS	0	0	8	Nil	8	2300

\*New Water Harvesting Structure, \*\* Watershed Development Fund Contribution  
(Data gathered from PIA)

The finding shows the marginalization of women in watershed development programme. Apart from disproportional representation of women groups in WCs and UGs in studied area, there are some specific problems identified by the female respondents during focussed group discussions. And these problems are improper health facilities, early marriage, improper nutrition, illiteracy and social, economic and political deprivation.

## CONCLUSION

Watershed development programme plays an important role to enhance the livelihoods, other natural resources and agriculture. The whole community is expected to participate in it to make the programme successful. But women participation, especially SC and ST women involvement is remarkably less in comparison to men. Many socio-cultural factors are responsible for it. But for empowerment of the ST and SC women groups, their active involvement in the decision making process is crucial for the watershed development. Women should be encouraged to take part in watershed development activities but it should not put extra burden on them. The fruit of the watershed development programme should be equally distributed among all sections of the society with special emphasis on gender issues. On the other hand, an effort to empower women through the process of watershed development programme has been taken as one of the key areas of all development projects.

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# Environment Legislations and Community Conservation Initiatives: Challenges in a futuristic perspective

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## ABSTRACT

Conserving the Indian heritage of biodiversity is a major challenge, especially given the large human population with its subsistence needs, and the growing resource demands of the urban-industrial sector. Over the years, keeping in pace with the growing concerns and international legislations directed towards biodiversity conservation, India has made strategic headway through several legislations, policies and initiatives. That apart initiatives towards integrating the conservation concerns over socio-ecological complexes and landscapes and gearing up the community conservation initiatives towards management of the endemic biodiversity over such areas have come out to be larger biodiversity management paradigm, over the last two and half decades. Further, policies and Acts for biodiversity management for institutionalizing biodiversity conservation in conformity to the international legislations and treaties like the Convention of Biological Diversity have been given larger focus in India. There have been diverse institutions created to facilitate conservation of landscapes, ecosystems, flora and fauna. On the flip side, the community awareness on the legal provisions and management denominations and paradigms is the least. The challenge for a biodiversity-rich country like India is not only to preserve its biological wealth alone, but also ensure that its conservation and use translates into the well-being of its people. Biological resources and the knowledge associated with it have the potential to generate wealth, where the term extends beyond its monetary value. If biodiversity laws themselves contribute to inequities and ambiguities, either through their content or in their implementation, then the need for such laws comes into question.

Under the backdrop of above the authors have analysed various biodiversity conservation legislations in India in a context which indicates that there is relative incoherence among the various legal instruments which creates confusions and understanding gaps and thereby hindering the implementation processes. The authors argue that a law such as biological diversity conservation legislation should, by virtue of its content and purpose suffices to convince people about its intent. Regrettably, despite dealing with the subject of conservation of biodiversity, it fails to do so.

**Key words:** Biodiversity, Cultural Diversity, Biodiversity Act, Community Reserve, Conservation Reserve.

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## Introduction

India has a great diversity of environmental regimes. The country qualifies as one of the top twelve countries in the world in terms of biodiversity because of its tropical and subtropical climate and its position at the junction of African, Palaeoartic and Oriental regions. Conserving the Indian heritage of biodiversity is a major challenge, especially given the large human population with its subsistence needs, and the growing resource demands of the urban-industrial sector. At the same time India is home to diverse cultural and ethnic forest dwelling communities. The tribal forest dwellers and their cultural diversity also need to be preserved along with biodiversity for mutual co-existence. Several factors such as habitat destruction and conversion, development projects, hydel and mining projects have largely contributed to the destruction of India's precious biodiversity. In the same pace modernization and expansion of markets have appeared as constant threats to erosion of cultural diversity and biodiversity over smaller geographical spaces well known for unique cultural distinctions.

Over the years, keeping in pace with the growing concerns and international legislations directed towards biodiversity conservation, India has made strategic headway through several legislations, policies and initiatives. One major aspect of such developments has been segregating the biodiversity hotspots in the name of Protected Areas especially for *in-situ* conservation of the typical faunal diversity. That apart initiatives towards integrating the conservation concerns over socio-ecological complexes and landscapes and gearing up the community conservation initiatives towards management of the endemic biodiversity over such areas have come out to be larger biodiversity management paradigm, over the last two and half decades. Further, policies and Acts for biodiversity management for institutionalizing biodiversity conservation in conformity to the international legislations and treaties like the Convention of Biological Diversity have been given larger focus in India.

The period of early 1970s in India marked a watershed in wildlife management. A comprehensive legislation for conserving wildlife, the Wildlife (Protection) Act (WLPA) of 1972 was followed by the launching of Project Tiger. The latter, besides being pivotal in ushering the era of scientific wildlife management in the country, was the first to establish the countrywide need for evolving wildlife management plans. In most instances wildlife and biological diversity are referred to as two different entities. Protected Areas (Sanctuaries and national Parks), earmarked as per the provisions of WLPA, 1972 and on the basis of stock taking of biodiversity and habitats management, management gained momentum after United Nations Conference on Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972 and the World Conservation Strategy launched in 1980. The World Parks Congress convened by the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), one of the six commissions of IUCN that sits every ten years, provides a major global forum to set the agenda for Protected Areas. Further, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 1992 ratified its conservation



agenda among member Nations. Since then, CBD Conference of Parties (CoP) is conducted at regular intervals to take stock of biodiversity targets and emerging issues and to prepare a roadmap to achieve biodiversity targets. In India, leaving apart the WLPA and Environment Protection Act, several legal arrangements towards maintaining and managing biodiversity has been formulated and ratified during the last decade of which the Biological Diversity Act and Rules, Forest Rights Act and Rules, are important legislations.

## **Biodiversity Conservation Legislations and Initiatives in India**

### **The Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972**

The WLPA, 1972 has been the most important Act in India for biodiversity conservation in Protected Areas (National Parks and Sanctuaries). The Act has been amended at different times to accommodate emerging issues and concerns, especially after the CBD was mandated in the country. However, the WLPA has provided very little space for the local communities in the aspects of management, decision-making and above all has curtailed their user rights. However, the WLPA amendment 2002 added two new categories of biodiversity reserves - conservation reserves and community reserves where the local people, their utilitarian and cognitive relationship with biodiversity has been accommodated.

### **Conservation Reserves**

The statement of objects and reasons of the Amendment Act, 2002 states that "Conservation Reserve" would be an area owned by the State Government adjacent to National Parks and Sanctuaries ..." the statutory provisions however does not restrict it only to those categories and includes wider category of areas. Conservation Areas more or less follows the legal regimes as are applicable to National Parks and Sanctuaries. Although, a representative body in the form of a Conservation Reserve Management Committee is established under the WLPA, its role is essentially advisory and the final authority still rests with the Chief Wildlife Warden of the State Government. The WLPA envisaged declaration of only government owned areas as Conservation Reserve and this in terms restricts the applicability of this Protected Area category. A single government notification results in the declaration of Conservation Reserve and in that respect follows the procedure of declaration of sanctuary out of an area comprised of a Reserve Forest. This category, however, does open up some space in the law for peoples' participation in wildlife conservation. Consultations with local people before declaring an area a conservation reserve is mandatory, as opposed to the situation in other protected areas such as national parks and sanctuaries.

However, the issue is that most of the potentially rich biodiversity areas conserved by people since ages qualifying to be declared as conservation reserves are under direct control of local people who may not be very happy with the legal arrangement for

constituting conservation reserves or community reserves. These lands are on government lands but the local people have worked out management and regulation institutions, and a high degree of *de facto* control. It is unlikely that these established institutions would agree to be a part of conservation reserve where their only role in decision-making would be to advise the chief wildlife warden of the state, who may or may not agree to the suggestions – is a standing dilemma. Additionally, the conservation reserve management committees (CRMC) to be established under the Act mandates representatives from *Panchayats* in an area rather than people actually conserving and managing the area. This could be a good category to initiate conservation in areas where it may not be happening already.

### **Community Reserves**

The statement and objects and reasons of the Amendment Act, 2002 states that the state governments are empowered to declare areas which are under private and community ownership as Community Reserve provided the members of the community or individual concerned are agreeable to offer such areas for protecting the wildlife together with the associated traditions, cultures and practices. The declaration of the Community Reserve involves one single Notification. Unlike a Conservation Reserve, no change in land use is permitted once a Notification has been issued under Section 36C (1) of the WLPA. However, similar to the case of Conservation Reserve, no legal provision exists for the denotification or alteration of the boundaries of the Community Reserve, however, the exact nature will depend on the guidelines and other working Rules that will be prepared by the CRMC. It is not expected that the restrictions as are applicable to a sanctuary will be applicable to a Community Reserve, since the essential purpose of community reserve is not just the protection of wild flora and fauna but also to preserve the traditional conservation values and practices. As such, Community Reserves are not envisaged as a "No Use Zone" rather as stated in the "Objects and Reasons", areas which are to be managed on the principles of sustainable utilization of forest produce.

These can only be declared by government on private or community lands. It may be possible to argue that the term 'community lands' should include government lands (particularly those that are being used as common lands), and big patches of private forests as in Kerala. Moreover, in its current form the Act does not recognize existing systems and institutions of management and has a uniform prescription for the composition of the local institutions.

### **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)**

Another amendment in the Wildlife (Protection) Act in 2006 has resulted in setting up of a National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA). This was a result of the dwindling population of Tigers in India. As one of the reasons for decline is tiger population has been identified as lack of peoples' participation in Protected Area and wildlife management, the Authority has been mandated to explore ways of facilitating peoples' participation in



wildlife management. This may help in bringing about a change in the general exclusionary model of conservation.

### **Biodiversity Act and Biodiversity Heritage Sites**

Drawing from the objectives of the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD), presumably, one of the primary objectives of Biological Diversity Act 2002 is to be the conservation of biological diversity and its constituent parts. However, the implementation of the law thus far, does not further the conservation provisions, even as they exist. Although the CBD emphasizes the importance of conservation with the involvement of indigenous and local communities, the efforts in the implementation of the Act appear to be focused towards facilitating access to biological resources and knowledge than towards conservation.

One of the provisions of the Biological Diversity Act 2002 includes creation of Biodiversity management Committees (BMC) at the village level. The National Biodiversity Authority and the State Biodiversity Boards established under the Act are required to consult local BMCs while taking decisions related to the use of biological resources and knowledge associated with such resources. This provides a space for local communities to participate in the governance and decision-making related to biological diversity to a certain extent. The BMCs are expected to be local institutions for the management, protection and recording of local biological diversity and it may be possible to give existing or new community conserved areas being conserved for agricultural or wildlife biodiversity as Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHS).

The National Biodiversity Rules under the BDA, formulated in 2004, failed to empower the BMCs and thus the local communities to manage, use and conserve natural ecosystems. Under the rules, the BMCs are limited to recording the local knowledge and to help the state and national boards to grant permission for the use of biological resources and knowledge associated with it in their areas. They also have a uniform institutional structure, which would be inappropriate in the context of community and conservation reserves. Therefore, as per the rules, the space to provide legal backing to conservation and community reserves is very limited. The rules for BHS has not been formulated yet so the category has not been implemented anywhere in the country. As some of the states like Madhya Pradesh and Sikkim have taken initiatives to form rule systems for BHS they may act as important references for designing framework for management of community reserves and conservation reserves, once they are declared.

### **Village Forests**

Section 28 of Indian Forest Act 1927 has a provision for declaring village forests (VF), under which villages get powers similar to the forest department. But despite being in existence for eight decades, this provision has hardly been implemented. No village forest

exists except for a few sites in Uttarakhand, Karnataka and Mizoram. If implemented this can be a strong category to support community and conservation reserves. Many potential sites that qualify for community reserve are not just areas under strict community protection but also areas from where biomass needs are met in a regulated manner. The village forest category entails handing over government-controlled reserve forests to local villagers for conservation and sustainable use and hence suits the purpose well. There are cases where many JFM villages have been demanding that they be declared village forests. The Govt's steering committee on Environment, Forest and Wildlife for the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012), has very strongly recommended that the village forests category be used for giving legal backing to existing JFM sites as well as other initiatives of the communities towards conservation of forests.

### **Community Forest Rights (CFR) under Forest Rights Act (FRA)**

The CFR titles under FRA 2006 is an outcome of long-standing demands from indigenous/tribal and other forest dwelling communities for recognition of their rights on forest lands occupied by them and resources or on which they depend for subsistence. The Act mandates establishment of such rights for tribal and forest-dependent communities. The Act allows for a greater role and empowerment of *gramsabhas* in determining claims, managing forests that they have conserving traditionally, checking processes destructive of forest dwellers' habitats and protecting traditional knowledge. It also allows for greater livelihood security for traditional forest dwellers who have been unjustly denied tenure, and mandates that any displacement and relocation can happen by consent. It provides a greater possibility of community involvement in government PA and also to the conservation reserves on the exterior part of the PA. If applied meaningfully and transparently, this Act could lead towards many forms of co-management and to greater livelihood security than is possible in current management regimes of forests, including in the national parks and sanctuaries in India.

Additionally, community forest is category under which the local communities can protect any forest that they have been traditionally protecting and can establish locally suitable institutions, rules and regulations. This kind of flexibility is not available in other Acts to the conserving communities, and could therefore be very significant in declaration and management of conservation and community reserves depending on the location of the community managed forests. However, this Act has an unclear relationship with existing forest and wildlife laws. The institutional arrangements for enforcement of the forest management and conservation provisions of the Act are also not very clear especially in relation to the areas where the forest department has existing jurisdiction. Although the rights would not rest on the local people, there is unclear provision to assign conservation responsibilities on right holders and *gramsabhas*.



## **Ecologically Sensitive Areas**

Under the Environmental Protection Act 1986 provision has been created to declare stretches of ecosystems as Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESA). Declaration of ESA would mean that certain identified commercial, industrial and development activities would not be allowed in the area. There are several ESAs in the country which have also importance in the context of conservation reserves and community reserves. The Act is a strong legal tool to fight against commercial and industrial pressures. However, communities know very little about this Act and how this can be used. Its relevance in the context of conservation reserves and community reserves need to be examined.

## **National Wildlife Action Plan (2002-2016)**

The National Wildlife Action Plan provides significant space for community participation in conservation. Although it emphasizes community participation in PAs, yet its provision may also extend to conservation and community reserves when wildlife is in question. Some of the commitments of NWAP, apart from many other things, includes –

- Evolving and prescribing guidelines for local community involvement in different management zones of PAs and adjacent areas. These guidelines would complement the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) guideline for planning PA management and ecologically sound community welfare programs. The implication of the provision may also cover the conservation and community reserves.
- Providing a range of incentives to conserve wildlife in different landscapes across different land and water uses: rewards and public honour for commendable conservation work and actions, granting of biomass and water resource rights for personal consumption for communities that have helped protect or restore wildlife habitats, employment in local conservation works, financial rewards and incentives to protect sacred groves, share in penalties extracted from poachers, share in tourism revenues, and incentives to move away from ecologically ill-advised activities.
- Encouraging people to help protect and manage wildlife outside PAs (including community conserved forests, wetlands, grasslands and coastal areas.

## **National Forest Policy 1988**

This policy deals with conservation and management of forests, afforestation and with the rules governing peoples' access to government owned forests and their products. This policy placed greater importance on using local forest resources to meet local peoples' needs rather than the industrial needs. It was under this that the government resolution on JFM was passed in 1990. Since then millions of hectares of forests outside PAs have been brought under JFM, aimed at regenerating degraded forests with the participation of local communities and sharing the benefits accruing from timber harvests from these areas with

the local communities. Although with peoples' participation in management under JFM has resulted into restoring forests with endemic flora and fauna at many places, yet whether they would qualify for conservation reserves or community reserve, depending upon the location, is still a big question to be answered.

### **Institutional Overlapping – The Dilemma**

As discussed earlier, there have been diverse institutional denominations created/suggested to facilitate conservation of landscapes, ecosystems, flora and fauna. In the name of creating space for community participation in forest and wildlife management, number of institutions have been crafted or carved out through legislations and policies. Even today, confusions are widening in the context of wider implications of terms like conservation reserve, community reserve, biodiversity heritage sites, community forest rights, forests under CFM, forests under JFM, Ecologically Sensitive Areas, Village Forests, Eco Development Committees, mandates of National Wildlife Action Plan, provisions of National Forest Policy – all of these pronouncing community participation in forest and wildlife management. There are many patches known with other names qualifying for conservation reserves and community reserves but such patches are also under formal processes of participatory forest management. Would they be converted to units like conservation reserve and community reserve by a single notification of the state government? If it happens so then how and in what ways the community participation and the privileges and sanctions will be different from the earlier process of same community-led management?- are certain crucial questions widening the dilemma. Hence, while looking around to identify patches and declare the patches as conservation reserve or community reserve as the case may be, the state would be confronted with many such institutional, managerial, administrative, ecological and benefit sharing issues. It is clear, at this point of time that assessing the potential of certain sites to be declared as conservation reserves or community reserves would not be that easy a matter in the absence of a clear guideline and management framework.

In the context of Orissa, such confusions are also there with the state government and its functionaries. On the flip side, the community awareness on the legal provisions and management denominations and paradigms is the least. Now, bringing the state government and local communities to a single platform and facilitating the bilateral processes for declaration of conservation reserves and community reserves looms large. However, profiling certain areas for the sake of avoiding such confusions and to the benefit of management systems may provide insight and issues against declaring certain patches as conservation reserves and community reserves.



## **Promoting Community Conservation Initiatives: The way forward**

In Orissa there are numerous examples where communities are actively protecting and conserving biodiversity. These efforts cover conservation of vast array of ecosystems existing on private land, community owned lands, lands whose ownership is disputed, as well as government owned lands. These community led initiatives have created habitat spaces managed with great care that have enough merit to qualify for declaration as Community Reserves under scope of the WLPA amendment Act 2002. However, irony is that no significant initiatives have been taken towards at least making assessment for their potential to be declared as Community Reserve.

'Community conservation', in this context, mean conservation practices by local people otherwise called community who have been protecting and conserving varieties of ecosystems and land parcels like forests, coast, wetlands, agricultural landscapes, etc and in the process have been protecting specific and also a wide range of wild plant and animal species through means and systems devised by them. While achieving such conservation and/or protection they have also been able to ensure or are striving towards ensuring some level of livelihood security for themselves.

Conservation Reserves and Community Reserves have great potential for protection of biodiversity, maintenance of ecological services and gene flow of wildlife as these areas function as corridors between important wildlife habitats. Thus these reserves can be sighted as community based conservation models. They synergize the links between traditional agricultural system and forest ecosystems harmonized by interactions among the agricultural biodiversity and wildlife, thus provide larger landscape level integration. Although there has been legislations (WLP Amendment Act 2002) to delineate and declare such spaces as Conservation Reserves or Community Reserves for protection and maintenance of local biodiversity with participation of local communities, yet unfortunately, neither there has been significant initiative from the forest department nor any recognition given to these initiatives formally by the state as areas important for local economies or habitats for wildlife conservation. Lack of such recognition is resulting into destruction of more and more such areas because of mining, commercial leases, urban expansion and other development projects.

### **Major threats to Community conservation Initiatives**

#### ***Lack of Recognition:***

Majority of community conservation efforts in the state remain unrecognized by the state government. There is no mention or consideration of these efforts either in laws, policies, administrative programs or budget allocations. Although many of the initiatives exist on government lands, villages often find it difficult to solicit support from the government

while discharging their duties. In fact, programs like the Joint Forest Management, tend to undermine the local institutions governing these initiatives.

### **External influences:**

Many of these efforts are fading due to changing social values and dynamics, due to external forces, inappropriate development and educational models. These effects are more prevalent in case of initiatives based on religious beliefs.

### **Internal conflicts**

There are numerous instances where a split in the community initiative has occurred due to internal politics, conflicts, inequities and local dynamics itself. The relatively weaker institution makes sustenance of these efforts difficult because of fractures even in a coherent social capital.

### **Legal space for Community Conservation Initiatives (CCI) at the National Level**

CCIs as such hold no legal recognition in the State. Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act of 2002 gives a provision to the State to declare certain areas as Community Reserves. The State Government may declare any private or community land, where community or individual has volunteered to conserve wildlife and its habitat, as a community reserve for wildlife conservation, provided that the land is not falling within a National Park, sanctuary or conservation reserve.

Despite such strong provisions in Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act of 2002, very less work is done in this direction. Orissa stands out, with unique examples of community efforts towards nature and species conservation, but till date none of the sites have been declared as 'Community Reserves'. The Government should recognize these community initiatives as legitimate and important conservation tools to develop participatory models of conservation

### **Concluding Remarks**

For sake of biodiversity conservation mere declaring certain areas as 'protected' or 'reserves' may not fulfil the objective. Apart from the scientific approach, traditional approach is essential for effective conservation of biodiversity. Most of our conservation programs based on western ways of thinking, ignoring the ideas and values held by the local people, and as such they are less successful. The 15<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly of IUCN held in Christchurch, Newzealand, in October 1981, recognized the importance of the cultural heritage of mankind and the role of traditional cultures in conservation of nature (Mac Neely and Pitt, 1985 cf Gadgil and Guha, 2002). One of the four important recommendations that emerged from this session urged to 'take into account the still



existing, very large reservoir of traditional knowledge, philosophy and experience within local cultures which must provide a significant basis for the evolution of future management policies and planning action. Further, indigenous knowledge in biodiversity conservation would invariably supplement and perhaps in the long term largely replace more conventional schemes for the protection of wild areas through national parks and sanctuaries (Gadgil and Guha 2002).

The challenge for a biodiversity-rich country like India is not only to preserve its biological wealth alone, but also ensure that its conservation and use translates into the well-being of its people. Biological resources and the knowledge associated with it have the potential to generate wealth, where the term extends beyond its monetary value. If biodiversity laws themselves contribute to inequities and ambiguities, either through their content or in their implementation, then the need for such laws comes into question. A law such as biological diversity conservation legislation should, by virtue of its content and purpose suffice to convince people about its intent. Regrettably, despite dealing with the subject of conservation of biodiversity, it fails to do so. The management of biological resources and related knowledge, by the State, should be assessed against this backdrop. The emphasis under the Biodiversity Act on identification of endangered species and documentation of biological resources in itself does not mean conservation is guaranteed. The documentation and inventorisation, given the political economy of control over resources, shows no significant progress towards either conservation or livelihoods objectives. Therefore, the current challenge is protecting both what remains of our biological diversity as also the associated knowledge which cannot be separated from the biological resources.

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# **Unearthing the Roots of Alienation of Adivasis from Forest Land: An analysis in the context of Odishan Tribes.**

*Kartik Prasad Jena*

## **ABSTRACT**

*This paper analyses the situation of tribal land alienation and involuntary displacement. It has sought to explore the tribals' traditional social and economic rights on various types of lands in tribal areas in the context of their concept of property and their culturally sanctioned pattern of ownership, management, inheritance and transfer of property, to explain the root causes and the processes that lead to land alienation and land encroachment in tribal areas and depeasantization of tribal people and to examine the impact of the protective legislations in protecting their land rights and laws for conservation of forests.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The tribes of India occupy a unique position in Indian culture and civilization. They have been living in the forest, hills and naturally isolated regions for generations. Forest based resources are central to the social and cultural existence of these tribal people. These forest dwelling communities are known by different names meaning either the people of forest and hills or the original inhabitants. The popular names are Vanyajati (forest community), Vanvasi (inhabitants of forest), Pahari (hill-dwellers), Adimjati (original communities/primitive people), Adivasi (first settlers), Janjati (folk people), Anusuchit Janjati (scheduled tribe) and so on. Among all these terms, Adivasi is known most extensively and Anusuchit Janjati (scheduled tribe) is the constitutional name covering most of them.

They have been using forest land for generations without any formal recognition over their right. The history of these forest dwelling communities and their customary rights over forest land are rife with exploitation that has undermined their very survival and dignity. Their right, being a part of the broad human right phenomena, has acquired significance in recent times. As denizens of hills, forests, inaccessible terrains rich in natural resources,

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they had for centuries, free access to as much land as they could reclaim and cultivate without any competitor. However, since the 19th century, materially advanced and greedy non-tribal people have infiltrated into their exclusive domains and encroached upon their age-old customary land rights. The colonial perspective on forest management has failed and it has alienated a large chunk of the forest dwellers, especially the tribes from forests and forest-based livelihood. Further, their plots of land have been taken away in the name of economic advancement of the country. As a result, the alienation and exclusion of Adivasis from their historical rights over their natural resources continued in the name of 'national interest', which took the form of large dams and mega industrial and mining projects. In the process, they have become landless and impoverished. The existence of gross illiteracy, ignorance and poverty among tribal people combined with the prevalence of poor land record system in tribal areas, non-recognition of their rights on land used for shifting cultivation by tribes, declaration of deemed Reserve Forests and Protected Forests, have resulted in continuous transfer and passing of lands from the hands of tribal people to non-tribals and to the State. In this way 'historical injustice' has been done to these forest dwellers of the country, which needs to be immediately addressed by recognizing their traditional rights over forest and forestland.

### **Concepts of Land Alienation:**

Alienation as a concept in the present context means: separation of land from tribal communities or passing of land from tribal people into the hands of non-tribals through manipulation of land records or by *benami* transfer or dispossessing the tribals of their forest land under the grab of Indian Forest Acts.

Land alienation is the single most important cause of pauperization of tribals, rendering their vulnerable economic situation more precarious, which has ultimately caused tribal movements or unrest in tribal areas of India in different periods of time, whose recent forms are seen as Naxalite movements or Maoist agitation in tribal dominated States of India. Though there are laws to prevent tribal land alienation, exogenous forces have circumvented these laws in various ways. Sometimes, due to lackadaisical implementation of existing land related laws, the very object of enactment is being defeated. Unfortunately, the provisions made in the Acts and Rules are followed more in breach than in adherence. It is against this backdrop, the following are the important objectives of the present study.

### **Objectives of the study:**

- 1) To explore the tribals' traditional social and economic rights on various types of lands in tribal areas in the context of their concept of property and their culturally sanctioned pattern of ownership, management, inheritance and transfer of property.
- 2) To explain the root causes and the processes that lead to land alienation and land encroachment in tribal areas and depeasantization of tribal people;

- 3) To highlight the existing provision of protective legislations of the State Government towards prevention of land encroachment and land alienation of tribals;
- 4) To examine the impact of the protective legislations in protecting their land rights and laws for conservation of forests;
- 5) To suggest policy measures/policy modification.

### **Methodology:**

- I) The present study is based on secondary literature survey and field data collected from five case studies conducted in the sample districts of Koraput, Gajapati, Malkangiri and Mayurbhanj, the tribal dominated districts of Orissa. The present study has identified some of the main processes which have led to poor access of tribals to land in tribal areas from the above five case studies and secondary literature survey.
- II) The present study is also based on a review of the preventive laws for tribals' land alienation as well as of the legislative and regulatory frameworks governing access of scheduled tribes to land

### **Organization of the Paper:**

The paper is organized into five sections. After introduction in **Section-I**, **Section-II** spells out the Scheduled Tribes in Odisha, their demographic, socio-economic profile and customary land rights etc.; **Section-III** highlights the existing laws and regulations to protect tribal land and forests; **Section-IV** brings out some major findings and explains the root causes, forms, and process of land alienation as revealed from field studies and discusses the consequences of tribal land alienation and **Section-V** deals with conclusion and suggests some policy measures to prevent land alienation.

## **II**

### **SCHEDULED TRIBES IN ODISHA**

#### **Demography:**

Odisha occupies a special position in the tribal map of India. The total number of Scheduled Tribe population in the State is 95,90,756 and they constitute nearly 22.85% of the total population of Odisha (2011 Census). In the State 62 tribal communities have been designated as Scheduled Tribes out of which 13 have been recognized as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). Most populous tribes are Kondhs, Gonds, Santals, Mundas, Oraons, Bhattadas, Bhumijas, Saoras, Parojas, etc., with many of them traditionally depending on shifting cultivation. Nearly half of the State's area (44.70%) is under Schedule V Area of the Indian Constitution. Scheduled Tribes (ST) constitute 68% and Scheduled Castes (SC) constitutes 20% of the total population of the Scheduled Area.



## Socio-Economic Profile:

The sex ratio among the STs indicates that there were 1003 females per 1000 male and the literacy rate among them was only 37.37% as against the overall 65.64% of the State (2001 Census). Two indicators of educational developments Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) and Gross Drop-out Rate (GDR) display an adverse trend in respect of ST boys and girls in Odisha. The gap in GDR between general castes and scheduled tribes which was 15.1 per cent in 2001-02 deteriorated to 16.6 per cent in 2003-04. The enrolment rate among the STs was 1,275 compared to the overall enrolment of 4,480 according to 2006-07 estimates in the State and the School dropout rate among the STs was the 5.15%, the highest, compared to the overall rate of 2.94% of the State between Class-I and Class-VII. The manual work participation rate among the STs was 48.99% as compared to 38.79 of the total work participation of the State. Some selected socio-economic indicators of STs are illustrated in **Table No. 1** below.

**Table No.1**

### TRIBES IN ODISHA: FIGURES AT A GLANCE

Selected Socio-Economic Indicators			
Indicators	Total	STs	%
Population (in millions)	36.80	8.15	22.13
Sex Ratio (2001): No. of Female per 1000 Male	972	1003	-
Literacy Rate (2001) %	63.08	37.37	-
Enrolment (2006-07)/ in '000 I- V Classes	4,480	1,275	28.46
VI-VIII Classes	4,269	1,153	27.01
School drop-out Rates between I-VII Classes	1,987	344	17.31
Health and Child Care Primary Health Centres (1988-99) {including P.H.C. (New) and CHC}	2.94	5.15	-
Health Sub-Centres (2000)	1,508	118	7.82
ICDS Projects (2000)	5,927	2,454	41.40
Work Participation Rate (%) (2001)	281	118	41.99
Below Poverty Line (Rural families) as on 31.05.2000 (Provisional)	38.79	48.99	-
The average area of holdings operated in hectares (2000-01)	44,73,654	13,99,245	31.28
Members of Parliament (Lok Sabha)	1.25	1.33	-
Members of Legislative Assemblies	21	5	23.13
No. in I.A.S. (as on 01.10.06)	147	34	23.13
No. in I.P.S. (as on 01.10.06)	168	4	2.38
	98	3	3.06

Source: SCSTRTI, ORISSA 68A, 2008

In Odisha, 47% of its population is living below the poverty line, i.e. living on less than a dollar a day. In the Scheduled Area, the scheduled tribes are the poorest groups. In 1999-2000, 73% of the Scheduled Tribes in Odisha were below poverty line as compared to 55% and 33% respectively for Scheduled Caste and General Castes (Haan and Dubey, 2003). The situation in South Odisha is even worse with approximately 87% of the Scheduled tribes remaining below poverty line.

### **Scheduled Areas in Odisha:**

Following areas in Odisha are under Schedule V of Indian Constitution. They are: Mayurbhanj, Sundargarh, Malkangiri, Nabaranghapur, Rayagada and Koraput districts in whole, Kuchinda Tahasils of Sambalpur district, Kandhamal, Baliguda and G.Udayagiri Tahasil of Kandhamal district, R.Udaygiri Tahasil, Gumma and Rayagada block of Parlekhemundi Tahasil in Parlakhemundi Sub-division and Suruda Tahasil of Ghumsur sub-division in Ganjam district, Thuamul Rampur and Lanjigarh blocks of Kalahandi district and Nilagiri block of Balasore district. The total area of the Scheduled Area contains almost 70% of the forest areas of Odisha even though they form only 44% of the total State area.

### **Customary Land Rights enjoyed by the Tribal People:**

In Odisha, despite the diversity, tribal communities dwell in compact areas and follow a community way of living in harmony with nature and have a unique culture, distinctive customs, traditions and beliefs which are simple, direct and non-acquisitive by nature. Most tribes tend to follow a clan based land tenure system which provides customary rights on land, trees, forests etc. Tribes like Kondhs, Saoras, Parojas, Gadabas, Bondos, Juangs and Bhuyans traditionally carry out shifting cultivation along with paddy farming in valley lands. Most of the tribes broadly cultivate four types of land, such as: valley bottom lands or wetlands, homesteads/backyard land, up land and swiddens or shifting cultivation fields. On an average 74% of the land in Scheduled areas of Odisha is categorized as state land, with forest land at 46% and non-forest land at 28%. Thus three fourth, of all land in the tribal dominated districts belongs to the State; even though subsistence agriculture is the most important source of their livelihoods (K.Kumar, 2005). A case study taken up by SCSTRTI, Odisha in 1978-80 in all Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) areas shows that 22.84% of tribal households are landless whereas 40.46% own less than 2.5 acres each. Another analysis of the Agriculture Survey data of 1995-96 in the tribal districts shows that the percentage of tribal land holders having less than one standard acre of land ranges from 41% in Malkangiri to 77% in Gajapati, (Kumar et. al.2005). According to 2000-01 agricultural Census of Odisha, the scheduled tribes' average holdings in Odisha works out to be 1.33 hectare as compared to 1.25 hectare for general castes. However, being the natural owners of forests and its adjoining lands, the tribals are being deprived of their rights to own them. They have been relegated from their earlier self-reliant status to a dependent one.



Over a period of time, there has been a massive alienation of tribal lands in Odisha. According to the Annual Report 2007-08 of the Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India, in Odisha a total of 1,05,491 (1.05 lakh) cases of Tribal land alienation covering an area of 1,04,742 (1.04 lakh) have been registered and filed in the Courts of Odisha. Out of that 1,04,644 cases have been disposed of by the Courts, of which 61,431 (61.43 thousand or 58.23%) cases have been decided in favour of the tribals covering an area of 56,854 (56.85 thousands or 54.28%) acres of land. But in real term 54,250.70 acres of land has been actually restored to the tribal community.

### III

## EXISTING LAWS AND REGULATIONS TO PREVENT LAND ALIENATION

### A Trade-off between State Laws for Prevention of Land Alienation and the State's Forest Protection Policy:

Over periods of time, thousand acres of tribal land have been alienated marginalizing the vulnerable tribal folks. From time to time they have risen against such exploitation and Governments in pre and post-independence era have taken note of such uprisings and adopted various protective and welfare measures to safeguard the interests of the tribals. The following historic Acts of the State were/are in force to control, check and restrict the transfer of tribal lands to non-tribals and the State legislations to protect the forests in the State of Odisha before and after independence.

#### I. State Laws to Protect the Interest of Tribes and to prevent their Land Alienation:

<b>(A) Pre-independence Acts and Regulations</b>	<b>Purpose &amp; Areas Where Applied</b>
1. The Government of India Act of 1870 for "Scheduled Tracts"	First gave recognition to tribal areas in India for protection of their lives and interests.
2. Central Province (CP) Tenancy Act 1898, (as amended by Act 16 of 1953)	Bargarh and Sambalpur Sub-divisions of Sambalpur District under erstwhile Central Province - at present Madhya Pradesh (imposed restrictions on transfer of tribal land to non-tribals)
3. Agency Tract Interests and Land Transfer Act, 1917	The Agency Areas of ex- Madras Presidency including the whole of Koraput District (except Kashipur Tahsil), the agency part of Ganjam District and the Baliguda Sub-division of Boudh-Kondhmal District.
4. C.P. Tenancy Act, 1920 (as amended by Orissa Act 15 of 1953)	Nuapara Subdivisions of Kalahandi District (imposed restrictions on transfer of tribal land to non-tribals)
5. Khondmal Laws Regulation Act 1936	Khondmal Subdivisions of Boudh District (imposed restrictions on transfer of tribal land to non-tribals)
6. Bhuyan and Juang Pirhof Keonjhar Immigration Act, 1947	Bhuyan and Juang Pirh area of Keonjhar ex-State (to prevent unauthorized settlement of non-Bhuyan and non-Juang intruders in the Bhuyan & Juang Pirh areas)

<b>(B) Post Independence Acts and Regulations</b>	<b>Purpose &amp; Areas Where Applied</b>
1. Orissa Merged States (Laws) Act, 1950	In the areas of ex-States which merged in Orissa in 1948 and 1949 to restrict alienation of tribal land to non-tribals)
2. The Orissa Scheduled Areas Transfer of Immovable Property (by STs) Regulation, (OSATIP) - 1956	In the Scheduled Areas of Odisha
3. OSATIP Regulations, 1959	In the Scheduled Areas of Odisha
4. OSATIP Regulations, 1976	In the Scheduled Areas of Odisha
5. Orissa Govt. Land Settlement (OGLS) Act, 1962	In all areas of Odisha
6. Orissa Prevention of Land Encroachment (OPLE) Act, 1972	In all areas of Odisha
7. OPLE Rule - 1985	In all areas of Odisha
8. The Orissa (Scheduled Areas) Debt Relief Regulation, 1967	In the Scheduled Areas of Odisha
9. The Orissa (Scheduled Areas) Debt Relief Regulation, 1970	In the Scheduled Areas of Odisha
10. Orissa Land Reform Act, 1960 & 1964	Non-Scheduled Areas of Odisha (To evict non-Tribals from the land of tribals for unauthorized occupation within 30 years)
11. The Orissa Prevention of Land Encroachment Act, 1972	All areas of Odisha (Landless STs in unauthorized occupation of Govt. land will be settled with the same)
12. Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) (PESA) Act, 1996	In the Scheduled Areas of Odisha
13. The Orissa Scheduled Areas Transfer of Immovable Property (by STs) Regulation 2 of 1956 (Regulation 1 of 2002)	In the Scheduled Areas of Odisha
14. The ST & Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006	In the Scheduled Areas of Odisha
15. The ST & Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (Act, 2 of 2007)	In the Scheduled Areas of Odisha

## 2. State Laws to Protect Forest Land and Deprive Tribals of their Customary Rights on Forest Land:

National Forest Policy 1952	Reinforces the claim of the State to exclusive control over forest and forest resources
Creation of Deemed Reserved Forests Amendment 20(A) Indian Forest Act (IFA) 1927, and Section 33(A) of Orissa Forest Act, 1972	Bans Shifting Cultivation in the State



A cursory glance at the above provisions of State legislations and rules shows that Government have been making laws and rules from time to time to control and check land alienation of tribals and at the same time making laws to protect forests and declaring reserved forests thereby restricting the access of tribals to forest land on which they have thrived since time immemorial. This has ultimately led to a violation of tribals' age-old customary rights on forests. So due to the double edged nature of the State policy, there is a trade-off between the State policy to protect forests on one hand and on the other, to deny the enjoyment of basic rights of the tribals on the forests and forest resources as guaranteed by certain protective laws of Government.

Out of the above mentioned State Acts and Legislations, the passage of the two Tribal Friendly Acts namely, PESA Act of 1996 and Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Right Act 2006) are major victory for the tribals and forest dwellers and a big step in their struggle to reverse the historical injustice done to them. The PESA Act is a revolutionary piece of legislation that ensures restoration of power to tribal communities and to safeguard their unique cultures, customs, traditions and restore their community control over common property resources. The spirit of PESA is to empower the Gram Sabha as a basic unit of participatory democracy at grass root levels which aims at establishment of the village Panchayats as a self-governing institution. On the other hand the 'Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act is a landmark legislation meant to address both the forest rights and the occupancy rights of the tribal people, who had been using forestlands for generations without any formal recognition. People have been living in the forests for generations but they are always condemned as 'encroachers' by the forest officials as they do not have legal rights over the land they are residing or cultivating. This Act has recognized their customary rights over forest lands.

#### IV

### STUDY ANALYSIS AND MAJOR FINDINGS

The findings, interpretations and conclusions expressed in the present study are based on secondary and primary i.e., field data collected from five exhaustive case studies conducted in the sample districts of Koraput, Gajapati, Malkangiri and Mayurbhanj, the tribal dominated districts of Odisha, to analyze the impact of land alienation on tribes. Land laws and land issues are many and all of them cannot be covered in this write up. Only limited problems of greater concern and importance have been touched upon and a brief summary of the above mentioned comprehensive and exhaustive case studies has been presented in this paper, lest it may run into hundreds of pages and become lengthier. The following are some of the key findings and field experiences derived from the above case studies. The present study has identified the following processes through which tribals have lost access to land and forest essential for their survival and livelihood. Their lands in many areas have

been transferred and passed into the hands of non-tribals in spite of the existence of laws/legal prohibitions against such transfers. Taking the advantages of ignorance, simplicity and poverty of the tribal people, the economically and politically more powerful non-tribal people have exploited the loopholes of such protective laws and continued to circumvent the legal provisions by entering into *benami* or other clandestine transactions with the native tribals even without obtaining Government permissions as revealed from the field studies.

### **Causes and Forms of the Tribal Land Alienation Process**

The following points are reported to have been the root causes of the systematic exploitation of the tribal people and the process of land alienation as found from the empirical studies.

#### **1. Pre-Colonial Invasion over the Forest Land Rights of the Tribes:**

In the medieval India, the ownership of the forests was with the local chiefs with access rights to the local communities. Adivasis in many regions of the country live in enclaves, a process which began when dominant clans and communities of Aryan origin began to invade the fertile plains and the Adivasis were driven further and further away, into the deep forest areas and hilly regions

#### **2. Purposive State Intervention in the form of Indian Forest Act from 1865 to 1878 to 1927 during Colonial Period :**

In colonial India, tribal communities and their livelihoods were threatened, as the colonizers saw the extensive forest areas as a major source of revenue and timber. Towards the beginning of the nineteenth century, the British wanted to undertake unhindered exploitation of timber, which required that the Government assert its ownership over forest management that existed in most parts of the country. This had nothing to do with conservation; it was a clever ploy to keep under their direct control of the trees, timber and forest routes. In order to legitimize it with law, a series of legal instruments were passed in the form of forest acts from 1865 to 1878 to 1927. These Acts empowered the Government to declare or notify any area as a reserved or protected forest, following which a "Forest Settlement Officer" supposedly would enquire in to claims of rights (to land, forest produce, pasture, etc.) The colonial forest administration camouflaged timber extraction as conservation thus curtailing livelihood rights of tribes, through classification of forests and prohibition of customary use rights. The Indian Forest Act (IFA) of 1927 remains India's central forest law and with minor modifications is still operational in independent India.

#### **3. Continuation of the Indian Forest Act in Independent India :**

After independence, the same Forest Law of the British Raj continued governing forest areas in India. In fact, the Indian Forest Act of 1927 was extended even to Scheduled Areas, which were dominated by Scheduled Tribes, under the fifth schedule of the Indian Constitution, as well as to the Princely States. The process of land acquisition begun



under the British continued after independence and between 1951 and 1988 the colonial instrument of IFA was used to bring an area of 26 million hectares under the regime of the Forest Department. The assumption under the Indian Forest Act was that, the forest has been destroyed by the forest dwellers/tribals and it needed to be protected/conserved from them, through in reality mindless exploitation of the forest and its wildlife were the handiwork of the rich and the influential. Though the Forest Conservation Act restricted forest diversion for non-forest use, by prescribing prior permission and a high conversion rate, it in effect, made such diversion possible for them. It is interesting to note that the law being what it was, for the rich with their money and influence forestland diversion was easier whereas the poor forest dwelling tribals were termed as 'encroachers' and a direction for their eviction was issued by the Ministry of Environment & Forest (MoEF) through the May 2002 circular.

**4. Loss of Tribal Rights over Government and Forest Lands due to lack of proper recording of Occupational Rights through Survey and Settlement:**

Tribal people lost their rights over government land due to the following reasons:

From the case studies conducted in four districts of Koraput, Gajapati, Malkangiri and Mayurbhanj, it is revealed that the tribals were/are never recognized as owners of the lands in tribal areas which they cultivated over the years, from generation to generation. Increasing importance of forest (timber) based revenue led both the pre-independence rulers (Princely States and British rulers) as well as post-independence Govt. of India to reserve and notify more and more areas as forests. Various forest laws and rules were formulated by the State imposing restrictions upon the tribals on using these forests. Clan and lineage territories were not recognized in the forest settlement operations. Such forest notifications were carried out without proper survey and settlement which even did not recognize rights of their permanent cultivation.

**5. Loss of Land due to Non-Recognition of Rights on Shifting Cultivation:**

From time immemorial, some tribal communities have been carrying on shifting cultivation on the hill-slopes and forest areas. But, large areas of shifting cultivation land were declared as forest land by the Government during both pre-independence and post-independence periods. Shifting cultivation was banned. According to one estimate, shifting cultivation areas ranging from 5298 sq.km to 37000 sq.km (Pattnaik-1993) has not been settled with the dependent tribal communities and is categorized as State land, either as forest or revenue land. This has affected the availability of land for the tribal communities and given rise to continuous conflict and repression.

**6. Loss of Land in Un-Surveyed Areas:**

Large areas of the State in forest areas have been left un-surveyed and rights of tribals on these lands have not been settled.

**7. Loss of Private Tribal Patta Land through Manipulation of Land Records by Non-Tribals through Private Transaction:**

Illegal private transaction is reported to have been the most important cause for loss of Patta land settled with the tribals. In the tribal districts one fourth (1/4th) of the lands is recognized as Patta land and settled with the land holders. The rest 3/4th of the land belongs to the State. From the present case study it is reported that in the sample districts of Gajapati and Koraput less than 10% land is owned by tribals. The per-household land ownership among tribal households is extremely low at 1.12 standard acres. The average land holding of tribal households in all the tribal area is only 1.06 standard acres with 20% of household being landless and 65% being small and marginal farmers. This 1/4th patta land is also being lost by the Scheduled Tribes through the following processes.

**8. Private Land Loss through Debt Mortgages:**

To raise loans to meet various needs, such as for meeting expenses on ceremonies of marriage and deaths, the tribals have to give their lands as mortgage to rich farmers. Informal mortgaging of land is one of the most important modes of private land alienation as revealed from both the case studies and from secondary literature. The laws regulating money lending are ineffective and impractical from cultural context of tribals, who mostly rely on oral transactions.

**9. Sale of Land by the Tribals through Private Transactions:**

This is reported to be another important cause for alienation of private tribal land especially before 2002. In 2002, the law was amended to totally ban on sale of land by tribals to non-tribals in the State Policy as mentioned earlier. The current law provides for detection of illegal land transfers from tribals and non-tribals after 1956 and restoration of the land to tribals.

**10. Loss of Land Due to *benami* Transfer:**

Taking the advantage of ignorance and needs of the tribals, a bulk of land is being transferred through *benami* transactions.

**11. Loss of Private Land due to Influx of Non-Tribals:**

Rapid population growth has led to influx of non-tribals into tribal areas and the encroachment of tribal land by non-tribals through *benami* and fraudulent means.

**12. Land Transfers before the Current Protective Laws were in Place:**

Much of the lands are reported to be transferred to non-tribals before the current protective laws were passed. There were periods when no protective laws were in place, or the protective laws were full of loopholes.



13. Establishing marital relations with tribals or concubinage is another form to circumvent the law and grab tribal lands at no cost at all:

14. The slackness in the implementation of the restrictive provisions encourages the non-tribals to occupy the tribal lands.

Land alienation which takes place in various ways has assumed alarming proportion threatening the right to the life of the tribal population.

16. Loss of Tribal Land through Displacement by Land Acquisition by Government for Development Projects:

Though Indian Constitution provides for protection of rights on land for STs, in Odisha, the STs have been affected by large scale displacement due to land acquisition by government for different development projects such as infrastructure projects, reservoir and irrigation projects, energy projects, mining and industrial projects undertaken in most of the tribal dominated districts of Odisha as illustrated below in Table No.2.

Table No.2

Some Irrigation and Industrial Projects in Scheduled Areas of Odisha State				
Name	Area acquired/ affected (ha)	No. of HHs affected	Tribal HHs as % of total HHs affected	Source
Machkund	6477	2938	1500(51%)	Fernandes et al, 1992
Salandi	1229	589	552(93%)	Dalua, 1991
Balimela	17496	1900	1507(79%)	Diwakar, 1982
Upper Kolab	11350	3179	1421(44.7%)	GOI, 1993
Indravati	17263	5534	2324(42%)	Ota
Rourkela Steel Plant	7917	2367	1657(70%)	
HAL, Sunabeda	3764	468	NA	
NALCO, Damanjodi	3444	788	398(50.51%)	
M/s.Orissa Sponge Iron Ltd., Palaspanga	176	NA	NA	
IPITATA, Joda	129	NA	NA	
UAIL, Kashipur	862	NA	NA	
Vedanta Alumina Ltd., Lanjigarh	707	NA	NA	
M/s. Jindal Steel & Power Ltd.	94	NA	NA	
<b>TOTAL :</b>	<b>70908</b>			

Land for land as compensation was generally not provided and displacements have led to severe cultural, social and economic dislocations for the tribals. Empirical studies reveal that displacement due to construction of dams, power plants, mining, oil exploration,

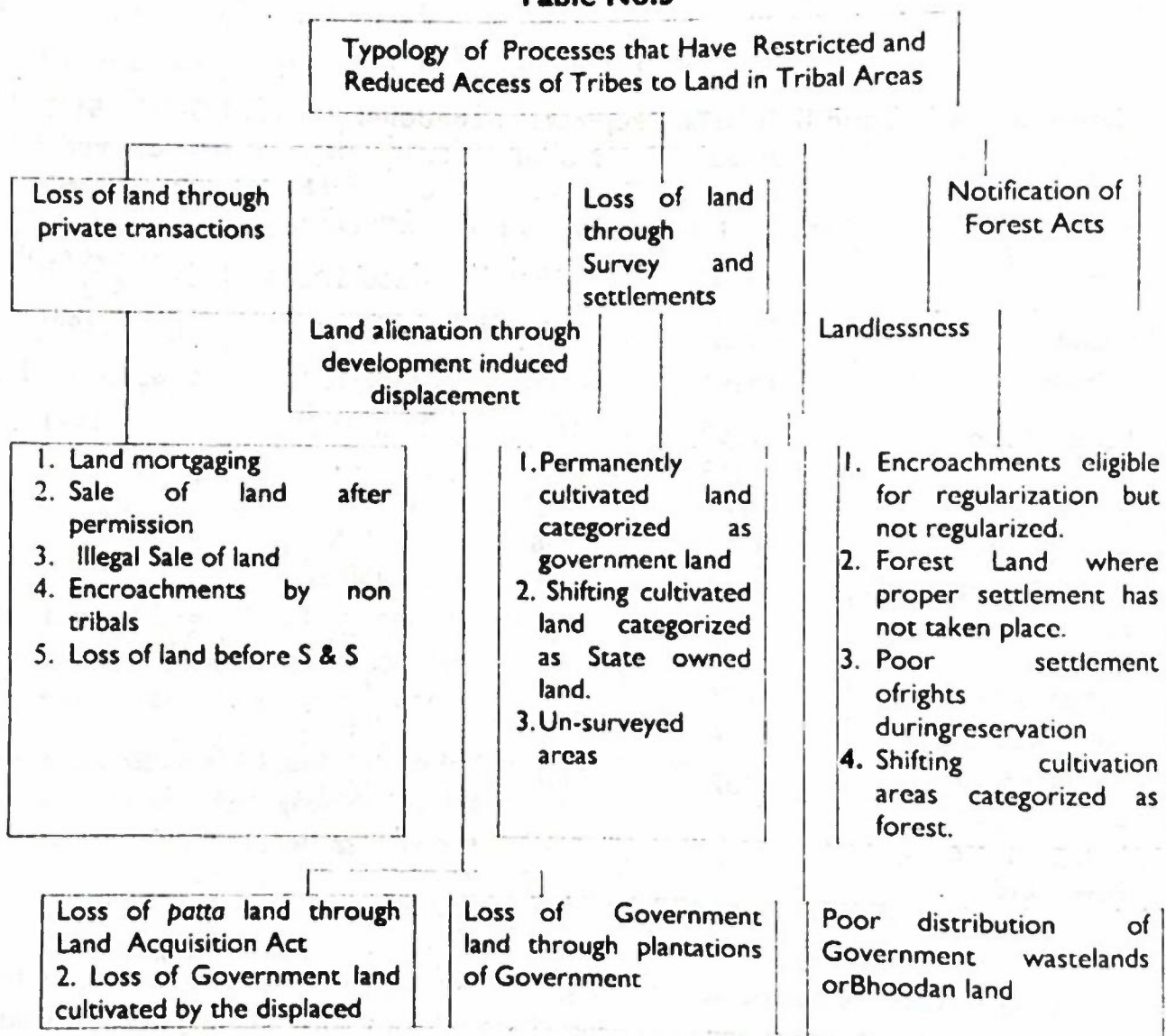
setting up steel plants etc.in Odisha has led to large increase in the extent of landlessness amongst the affected tribals. Environmental degradation, impoverishment and disempowerment have been the worst outcome of such development projects for the tribal people.

### 16. Loss of Tribal Land through Plantation:

Plantations on government land cultivated by the tribals emerged as a major reason for land loss. According to one estimate in last five years, 54,835 hectares of plantations are reported to have been carried out by Forest Department in four tribal dominated districts of Koraput, Rayagada, Malkangiri and Nabarangpur.

Different types of processes of transfer of land from the tribals to the non-tribals as well as to Government have been briefly illustrated in Table No.3 below:

**Table No.3**





## **Some empirical findings from Sample Districts**

A case study on two sample communities, Koya (100 sample households) and Santal (100 sample households) tribe, in Malkangiri and Mayurbhanj districts respectively undertaken in 2005-06 shows that majority households of these two communities in the above two districts appear to have become victims of land alienation through fraudulent transfers, forcible eviction, mortgages, leases and encroachments by non-tribals over the years as mentioned below.

### **Mode of Dispossession and Loss of Land by Tribals**

In Malkangiri district, out of the total land alienation cases of 100 Koya (households), 22 cases (22%) are reported to have taken place through sales deeds, 18 cases (18%) are through mortgages and 60 cases (60%) are through encroachments. Similarly, in Mayurbhanj district, of all land alienation cases of 100 Santals (households), 78 cases (78%) are reported to have taken place through sale deeds, 12 cases (12%) are through mortgages and 8 cases (8%) are through encroachment. One case of land lease is reported to have been by mutual agreement and one case of land exchange is reported to have taken place among Santals.

### **Sale**

In Malkangiri the total 22 Koya land owners have sold 63 Acres of their lands to 24 persons (8 STs, 2 SCs and 14 OCs). Out of them ten of the Koya land owners have sold their land after obtaining due government permissions whereas 12 have sold without permission. Two of them have sold their land to four persons under the duress of different social occasions. In Mayurbhanj district among the Santals, 78 owners (78%) have sold 104.60 Acres of their lands to 102 persons (70 STs and 32 OCs). Among them 26 cases are with prior government permission and the remaining 52 cases are without permission.

### **Mortgage**

In Malkangiri, it is reported that 18 Koya mortgagers (18%) have mortgaged their 50 acres of land to 18 non-tribal persons for Rs13000/-. In Mayurbhanj, all the 12 Santal mortgagers have mortgaged their 7.50 Acres of low land to 12 STs for Rs.24,800/-.

### **Encroachment**

In Malkangiri, the land of all the 60 Koya households have been encroached by their neighbouring non-tribal encroachers occupying 123.00 Acres of their land, i.e. 66 Acres of upland and 57.00 Acres of low lands. In Mayurbhanj district 8 Santal sample households have lost 10.76 Acres of land to their 8 neighbours (2 ST and 6 OCs) through encroachment. Of these, 4.50 Acres are uplands and 4.26 Acres are low lands and 2 (two) Acres are homestead land. Due to their ignorance and poverty, the victim households, have not sought for remedial action to regain the possession of their encroached land.

An in-depth analysis of the study further reveals that in Malkangiri out of total 100 Koya land alienation cases, 50% has taken place by forcible occupation by neighboring non-tribal land owners, 20% through illegal occupation by the share croppers, 15% due to family consumptions and drinks, 5% case has taken place each for marriage ceremony, funeral ritual and house construction and 10% is for financial hardships including repayment of old debts. Similarly, in Mayurbhanj district the study reveals that among the total 100 Santal land alienation cases, 10% has occurred for purchase of draught animals, agricultural assets and implements, 20% for household consumption and drinks 20% for medical expenses, 10% for meeting ceremonial and ritual expenditures, 5% for children's' education, 10% for redemption of old loans, 5% agricultural cost for distantly located land, 3% for employment of children, 5% for exchange of land, 6% for auction of land hankers and 6% for encroachment by outsiders.

### **Effects of Land Alienation and Displacement of Tribes**

The important consequence of land alienation is the displacement of tribes from hills and forest areas. Such displacement of tribes from tribal area either by non-tribals through private land transaction or by forcible manipulation or by Government through land acquisition for various development projects as mentioned in previous section has resulted in an adverse effect on culture and social existence of tribal communities. Firstly, displacement has led to destruction of their livelihood support system including forest and water sources. Secondly, it has worse climatic and environmental degradation effects due to large scale air and water pollution by the factories and industries set up in the tribal areas. Thirdly, it has caused cultural genocide of tribes through massive influx of non-tribe outsiders in to their domain. All these have ultimately caused economic pauperization and political and social marginalization of the affected tribal communities at large in the State.

## **V**

### **CONCLUSION AND POLICY SUGGESTIONS:**

#### **Conclusion:**

From the study it is concluded that there is a wide gap in existing legislations and their implementation at the grass root level. Land alienation is rampant in Odisha. As land alienation has taken place in other parts of the State, the tribals of Koraput, Malkangiri, Gajapati and Mayurbhanj, the four sample districts of the present study, are also not spared. All the four sample districts of Gajapati, Koraput, Malkangiri and Mayurbhanj districts, the number of detection of land alienation cases have risen after 2002. But in comparison with the two districts of Mayurbhanj and Koraput, the number of land alienation cases has risen significantly in the districts of Malkangiri and Gajapati and it has come down since 2004-05. Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in the Scheduled Areas empowered by the PESA are yet to



become watchful about illegal transfers/passing of land from tribal to non-tribal and even to the state government.

Due to the total ban on transfer of land in the Scheduled Areas, tribals are facing problems to mortgage their land for availing loans from banks/financial institutions to meet the expenses of agriculture, house building, medical treatment, higher education of children, self-employment, marriage ceremonies and birth and death rituals. As a result, they fall prey to the non-institutional village money-lenders or Sahukars and landlords from whom they get easy loans instantly at an exorbitant rate of interest after conceding to the exploitative terms and conditions imposed by the creditors for getting loans and in the process their plots of land slip into the clutches of these non-tribal money lenders and landlords. Further development induced displacement of tribals from forest land has caused environmental degradation, cultural genocide and economic pauperization, political and social marginalization of the affected tribal communities in the State.

### **Suggestions:**

- 1) An honest implementation of the 'Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Right) Act, 2006' and 'PESA ACT, 1996', will contribute towards better conservation, livelihood security and secure rights of the tribal and traditional forest dwellers in India, which has been long overdue.
- 2) There is a dire need to recast/amend Forest Rights Act as per the PESA provisions.
- 3) Panchayati Raj Institutions are to be empowered to act as watchdog against fraudulent transfer and illegal encroachment of tribal land.
- 4) Age-old traditional rights of the tribals to land should be settled and recognized by handing over of Record of Rights (ROR) to them.
- 5) Rights may be granted to tribals of the State to sustain their livelihood from the forests after completing authenticated survey and settlement operations.
- 6) Land reform measures and periodic measures including settlement and survey operations should be undertaken in full spirit in tribal areas for updating land records immediately.
- 7) The cadastral survey map should be digitized and updated in order to look at the physical status of the land owners in the tribal areas. All the complaint cases relating to tribal land alienation should be computerized and reviewed monthly.
- 8) Special fast track court should be established in the Scheduled Areas to deal with the cases of tribal land alienations for giving justice without delay.

- 9) Competent legal aid should be provided to the tribals at all stages of litigations. The judiciary should be requested to adopt a time limit of two years for disposal of case of tribal land alienation.
- 10) Tribal customs and traditions may be codified separately for adoption so that, the rights and titles of the successors in the interest of the tribals are respected and legally recognized.
- 11) Participation of traditional and modern tribal leaders be made mandatory in formulation of land and forest policies in minimizing the problem of land alienation;
- 12) There should be strong political will at all levels of the political leadership to prevent tribal land alienation.
- 13) Executive orders, Government Acts/Rules to be so framed or revised as the revenue officials to initiate proceedings *suo motto* for restoration of illegally transferred tribal land in a time bound manner and the accountability of its implementation should be fixed and the corrupt officials should be taken in to task.
- 14) Bhoo-dan and Gram-dan land continuing under the occupation and enjoyment of donors be identified and such land should be handed over to tribals along with the records of right (ROR).
- 15) The staff strength of Revenue, Tribal Welfare and concerned other departments should be increased for regular and timely updating of records.

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# Left-wing Extremism in India and its Implications on Tribal Tourism: The Case of Western Odisha

\* Anil Ota

## ABSTRACT

*Apart from desolating the harmonious socio-cultural fabric and the serene coexistence of heterogeneous people, extremism also negatively affects a variety of other aspects of human life. The present paper provides a perspective viewpoint based on an empirical study carried out by the author in sample Western Districts of Odisha concerning the implications of Left-wing extremism on the prospects of tribal tourism in the region. Appreciating the significance of socio-economic development on ideological fanaticism, the paper finds mention of the socio-economic and demographic landscapes of Western Odisha as well as a brief genesis of the interventions made for the region's growth and progress. Other key aspects highlighted in the paper prior to focusing on the critical issues affecting tourism in Western Odisha and proposing recommendations to overcome the same, include a brief overview of extremism in the region and a succinct account of major tourist destinations in the study area. A snapshot of the rationale, objectives, techniques used for the study as well as an impression of the sample covered and the sampling technique used have also been included in the paper under the auspices of Context Setting and Research Design. At the end of the Paper, the author has put forth a pragmatic position on the Tribal dimension of tourism in Western Odisha by citing the benefits that this section of people would accrue on account of an increase in the influx of tourists into the region.*

## Key Words

Extremism, Tourism, Tourist Destination, Tribals, Western Odisha

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## **INTRODUCTION – SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC APPRAISAL OF WESTERN ODISHA**

Western Odisha often termed as Koshala Odisha is better known for its infamous genesis of fiscal impoverishment characterized by starvation deaths, child sale, malnourishment, abject poverty and a wide array of associated social predicaments. The region also encompasses within its expanse the undivided Kalahandi-Bolangir-Koraput (KBK) Districts which dwell right in the bottom rung of the socio-economic pyramid of the State and perhaps even the Country. The major occupation of a vast majority of the populace of Western Odisha is an extremely crude and low-yielding version of agriculture which is largely devoid of technologically advanced farming equipments and techniques. Although industrialization is negligible but major Industrial Houses have exhibited their desire to set-up their respective business concerns in the future predominantly based on the rich mineral deposits of the region.

While there is a popular misconception concerning the demography of Western Odisha that it is dominated by the tribal population, the reality is that approximately, only 40 % of the region's inhabitants are native Tribes. Districts such as Koraput, Rayagada, Malkangiri and Nawarangpur situated in Koshala Odisha are typified by Tribal numerical preponderance. While Odias as a linguistic ethnic group is the second-most populous community in the region, other minority groups include the Telugus, Marwaris and Bengalis. Apart from the socio-economic adversaries specified in the trailing paragraph which the region and its citizenry endure, there are a large number of other tribulations that the Tribal inhabitants of Western Odisha suffer which includes landlessness caused by land alienation, alcoholism, involuntary displacement and improper rehabilitation and loss of access to forests. Although the general state of wellbeing of the region and its inhabitants has improved but the pace of transformation is awfully slow as most Government endeavors meant for the welfare of the region have either completely failed to meet their predetermined intents or were only partially successful.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The literature review of pertinent publications in the form of Research Papers, Books, Journals etc. carried out by the author can be segregated under two heads such as those relating to extremism in Odisha and those concerning tourism in the region. The succeeding paragraphs have been devised using the methodology of describing a relevant quote from a publication review followed by the analysis of the same in the language of the author.

#### **Extremism in Odisha**

The Naxalite movement is not a movement of landless peasants and tribals seeking to overthrow the state power. It is a project defined as such by those who are neither peasants nor workers nor tribals, but who claim to represent their interests (Simeon,



2010) [1]. Initially designated as a struggle for equivalent share in the power structure of the Country for the tribals, Naxalism has constricted its objectives from Tribal-wellbeing to individual need-suffice of a handful of rebellious elements. The *Adivasis* cannot represent themselves; they must be represented, it would seem. They must be represented either by agents of the state... or by the revolutionaries... (and)... the voice of the revolutionary is almost always that of a Brahman/upper caste i.e., Ganapathy or Koteswara Rao or their intellectual spokespersons. So we have a Maoist-aligned intelligentsia vicariously playing out their revolutionary fantasies through the lives of *Adivasis*, while the people actually dying in battle are almost all *Adivasis* (Nigam, 2010) [2]. Since the time immemorial, most Tribal Communities have been exploited by the socio-economically affluent Hindu outcastes through their iron-curtained approach towards assisting the forest dwellers in their food quest in general and their pursuit for life and livelihood in particular.

Whose axis and content is agrarian revolution, rejects the parliamentary path of participation in elections, and pursues the main objective... (of liberating)... the rural areas first and then having expanded the base areas – the centre of democratic power in rural areas – advance towards countrywide victory through encircling and capturing the cities (Banerjee, 2006) [3]. The strategic combat of military and psycho-social warfare which is being fought by the Naxalite-Maoist combine envisages a reverie which is well-beyond their present-day operations which are restricted to the jungles of East, Central and West India. Their toxic vision of infiltrating into Urban Conglomerations can certainly be labeled as a systematic enterprise towards creating social unrest across the Country which will help shape the foundation for a potential civil war in India. The immediate economic and social problems of the masses took a back seat and the battle for supremacy with the State became the central instance of struggle ... This requires a range of acts of violence, which have no direct relation to the immediate realization of any rights for the masses, though the resulting repression invariably hits at the masses (Balgopal, 2006) [4]. As illustrated in the preceding paragraph, the original intent of Naxalism encompassing within its fold a fight for Tribal rights has been overrun by the more dominant contemporary purpose of battling and bringing the State to the brink of defeat and relishing the power sieged through the hard-fought *guerrilla* war.

### **Tourism in Odisha**

The visitors may overexploit natural resources and it can have a heavy impact on the environment. In addition, the rural tourism will require infrastructure, transportation and other facilities which can cause environmental distortion (Halder, 2007) [5]. Mismanagement of natural resources owing to their reckless abuse by tourists is a major factor of concern. Under such circumstances, creation of enabling circumstances for inflow of large numbers of homeland and foreign tourists into Western Odisha, a vast proportion of which is covered by impregnable forests within which a significant fraction of its Sightseeing Locations are situated without devising and enacting appropriate legislative

frameworks to overcome the associated environmental predicaments might be devastating for the region's ecology. For tourism to excel as a revenue-generating industry, Orissa must re-design, renovate, and beautify our places of tourist and religious importance to a great extent (Satpathy, 2010) [6]. Apart from the acute lacuna of available monetary assistance for augmenting the maintenance standards of major Tourism Destination Sites in Odisha, another area of concern being encountered by the Tourism Sector of the State is the lack of interest being exhibited by the Welfare Government in renovating and preserving the Religious Structures located in the region which is widely regarded to possess a magnetic effect in attracting tourists from across the Country and even abroad.

## **GENESIS OF DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS IN WESTERN ODISHA**

While Western Odisha was recognized to be amongst the most economically backward regions of the Country in the post-independence era, no appreciable efforts were made by the Welfare Governments (Center and State) to condense its socio-economic dilemmas until the 1980s. In fact, it was only after regional, national and international reports highlighting large scale starvation deaths, child sale and malnutrition in the region rocked the Parliament that a constructive endeavor in the form of a dedicated Action Plan for the economic transformation of the region was devised and realized. Two of the major landmarks in the genesis of development interventions in Western Odisha can be termed as the Long Term Action Plan and the Biju KBK Plan a brief of which have been mentioned in the subsequent paragraphs: -

### **Long Term Action Plan (LTAP)/ Revised Long Term Action Plan (RLTAP)**

It is a special area development Project for the KBK Districts of Western Odisha. The Long Term Action Plan (LTAP) is the first major development endeavor envisaged and implemented by the Government of India (GoI) in 1993 for the holistic growth and progress of the region with the two-pronged objectives of poverty-alleviation and infrastructure development. In 1998, the LTAP was transformed with the inclusion of a few new features and was rephrased as Revised Long Term Action Plan (RLTAP) with its initial duration being stipulated for 9 years. Although the Area Development Approach for Poverty Termination (ADAPT) programme launched by the GoI in 1988 but its objectives were limited to poverty alleviation and its coverage was restricted to 08 Community Development (CD) Blocks of Kalahandi District and 7 C.D. Blocks of Koraput District.

### **Biju KBK Plan**

Popularly known as Biju Kalyan Yojna, Biju KBK Plan was launched by the Government of Odisha (GoO) to supplement the endeavors of the KBK Plan and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) for augmenting the overall Quality of Life (QoL) in Western Odisha. Named after the former Chief Minister of Odisha, Mr. Biju Pattnaik, the Plan aims at bolstering the ongoing pace of development in the region by creating opportunities for economic, social and human wellbeing, accelerating poverty



alleviation and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) through a range of interventions in the spheres of Rural Infrastructure, Livelihood, Employment Generation, Women Empowerment, Education, Health etc.

As indicated in the preceding paragraphs, a large number of development interventions adopting innovative strategies and mechanisms have been implemented in Western Odisha with special reference to the KBK Districts but hardly have any of them managed to appreciably diminish the socio-economic predicaments of the region and its inhabitants. Apart from the prevailing political contention and civil disorder in the region, the ongoing left-wing separatism can be attributed as one of the major factors for the prevailing pace of sluggish progress and growth in Western Odisha.

## **SEPARATISM IN WESTERN ODISHA – A NARRATIVE ACCOUNT OF THE RED CORRIDOR**

### **Exhibit I Vital Information concerning Separatism and issues of allied concern in Odisha**

1. 14 Districts out of 30 in the State are suffering from Left-wing Extremism [11]
2. One of the worst Naxalite-affected Districts is Koraput which in 2006 registered a literacy rate of 36.20 % and a poverty ratio of 78.65 % [7]
3. Another major Naxalite-affected District is Rayagada which recorded a Below Poverty Line population of 72.03 % as of 2006 [7]
4. With 22 Civilian and 17 Security Personnel casualties, Odisha was the third-most affected State with respect to Left-wing Extremism in India [8]
5. As of December 11, 2011, the number of Naxalite-related deaths in Odisha for the year was recorded to be 75 out of which 36 were Civilians, 16 were Security Personnel and 23 were Naxals [9]

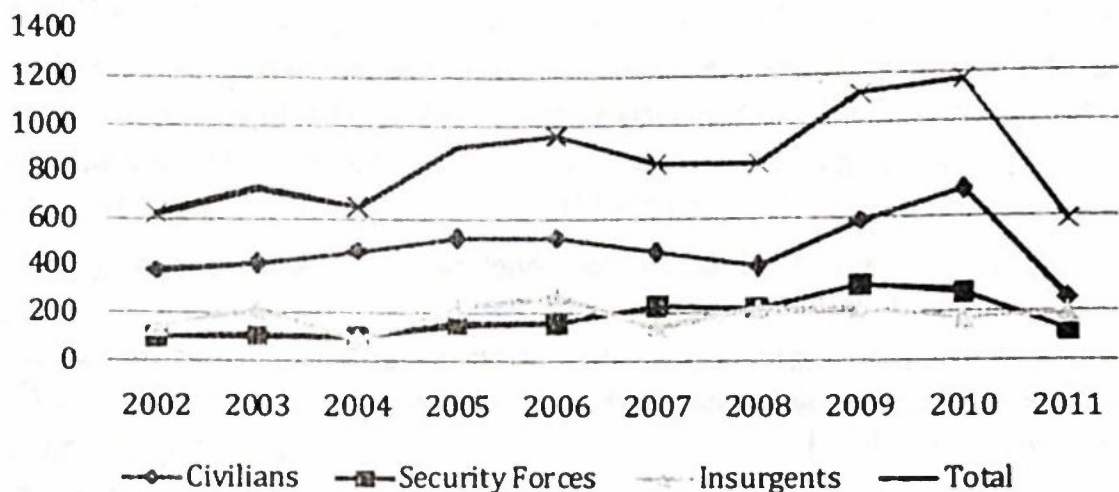
14 out of the 30 Districts of Odisha; all falling in the western region of the State are tottering under left-wing separatism [10]. The separatist affected Districts of the State include Koraput, Malkangiri, Nawarangpur, Rayagada, Gajapati, Ganjam, Sundergarh, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sambalpur, Jharsuguda and Deogarh. While the Coastal Districts of the State have been largely free from Maoist activities, the Communist Party of India (Maoist) cadres have been putting indefatigable efforts towards enlarging their scope of terror to Dhenkanal and Jajpur.

### **Exhibit 2 Red Corridor Districts of Odisha [11]**

Malkangiri	Nawarangpur	Jajpur
Ganjam	Mayurbhanj	Deogarh
Koraput	Sundergarh	Kandhamal
Gajapati	Sambalpur	Dhenkanal
Rayagada	Keonjhar	Nayagarh

Contrary to the popular perception, that Naxalism and Maoism as separatist movements are new to Odisha, it is worth mentioning that such violent entities have been in existence in the State since 1951 with evident signs of their implication on the law and order scenario being felt in the undivided District of Koraput in 1962 when a massive Food Liberation movement was launched in the Gunupur Block [12]. However, it was only in the early 1990s that these movements gathered momentum and for the first time spread over to Districts other than Koraput in the State primarily owing to the after effects of a legislative ban that was imposed upon them by the Government of Andhra Pradesh [13]. With the Naxalite-Maoist insurgency stepping its evil tentacles to the Coastal Districts of Jajpur and Keonjhar, the popular belief that this region of Odisha is impervious to left-wing separatism seems to have faded away and the need for a revamped strategy for overcoming this toxic challenge needs to be devised and put into practice on a conscientious basis.

**Figure 1 Naxalite-Maoist Insurgency related deaths in India (2002-2011) [14], [15], [16], [17], [18], [19], [20], [21]**



**Note: Data for 2011 is till December 18 2011**

From a National viewpoint, the Naxalite-Maoist insurgency spanning across the Red Corridor whose expanse has been widening and becoming ever-more lethal especially across the dense forests of Central, Western and Eastern India, poses a certain threat to the civil order. As indicated from Figure 1, the proportion of civilian deaths: insurgents, has become increasingly skewed between 2002 and 2011 in favor of the later which rationalizes the generally held belief that the noxiousness of the separatist elements is getting compounded with the passage of time and that their audacious acts of crimes of varying degrees is being buttressed by external elements sharing similar ideology.



## **TOURISM IN WESTERN ODISHA – BRIEF OVERVIEW OF MAJOR DESTINATIONS**

### **Exhibit 3 An Overview of Tourism in Odisha [22]**

1. Tourist visits to the State were recorded to be 64, 02, 411 in 2008, 69, 37, 194 in 2009 and 76, 42, 047 in 2010
2. Inflow of foreign tourists into the State in 2008 stood at 43, 966, in 2009 stood at 45, 684 and in 2010 stood at 50, 432
3. Homeland tourists visiting Odisha for the years 2008, 2009 and 2010 were recorded to be 63, 58, 445, 68, 91, 510 and 75, 91, 615 respectively
4. Odisha's share in national tourist arrival is 0.90 %
5. The maximum number of Foreign Tourists belonging to a particular Nation visiting Odisha were from U.K. with 6,810 of its citizens visiting the State in 2010

Western Odisha is home to some of the densest, the most gorgeous and unscathed forests of the Country. However, the spectacular and picturesque natural exquisiteness of the region in the form of breath-taking waterfalls and archeological monuments have seldom managed to attract a scale of tourist in numerical terms commensurating with the character of their true potential. While the critical issues affecting the prospects of tourism in Western Odisha have been highlighted in the subsequent sections of the Paper, the succeeding paragraphs have been used to reflect some of the major tourist destinations of the region.

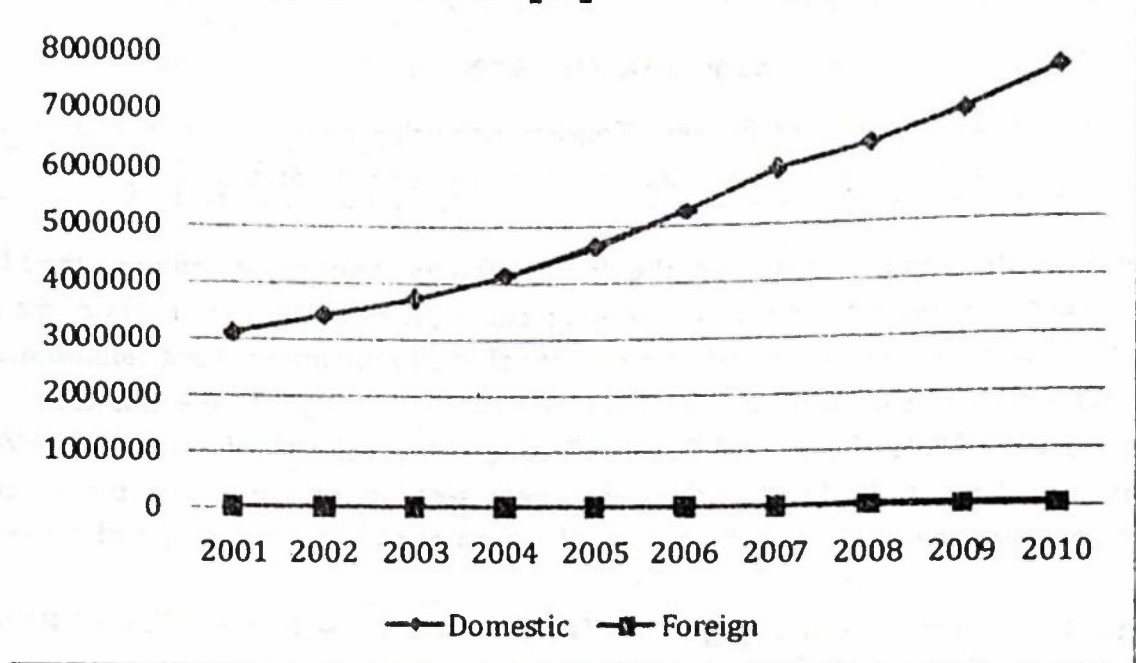
### **Exhibit 4 Destination Image of Western Odisha – Perception of Potential Tourists [23]**

Western Odisha in general and the tourist destinations of the region in particular are perceived by potential tourists to be gorgeous but at the same time perilous to visit. Potential Tourists who have not visited the region from both within the State as well as the Country and abroad assume the entire expanse to be situated within dense forests inhabited by Jungle Tribes who neither welcome outside visitors nor view them from a standpoint of companionship. The supplementary factor which plays a disparaging role in further negating the probable tourist base of the region is the successive reports highlighting incidences of Maoist and Naxalite-related violence published in regional, national and international media. To be precise, Western Odisha and its Tourist destinations are perceived to be attractive with regard to their exterior manifestation but are considered to be situated in a region characterized by a highly volatile socio-economic and security scenario.

The major Religious tourism destinations of the region include Harishankar, Jogisarada, Patnagarh, Nrusinghanath, Charisambhu, Belkhandi, Kusurla, Sapagaranda, Patalaganga,

Chipilima, Huma, Binika, Chandalipat, Kotsamlai, Ghagara, Vedavyasa etc. Similarly, the prime Scenic spots in the region include Turkela, Devdarha, Papanga, Gujapahar, Kulighugar, Pikalghugar, Jakam, Mardiguda, Rabandarh, Thuamul-Rampur, Patora, Sindursil, Gudguda, Hirakud, Chhatri, Darjeeng, Deodaraha, Mandira, Ushakothi etc. While the aforementioned list provides an account of the religious and scenic spots of Western Odisha, by no stretch of imagination, the same can be termed as an exhaustive one as a large number of other smaller tourist spots have been omitted on grounds of their relatively insignificant tourist base or potential for attracting tourists.

**Figure 2** Tourist Visits to Odisha [16]



While tourist inflow into Odisha from both within the Country as well as abroad has increased, the pace of growth of foreign tourists has been significantly slow as compared to their domestic counterparts. The most constructive phase of growth in the State's tourism industry in terms of tourist inflow has been in between 2004 to 2008 when the overall inflow of tourists encompassing both homeland as well as foreign tourists grew by almost 50%. However, the four-year phase was followed by a quiet period spanning over couple of years when both the domestic as well as foreign tourist inflow into the State reduced significantly before the sector experienced a steep surge in tourist inflow in the year 2010.

### CONTEXT SETTING AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Tourism is regarded as a lucrative sector in India. With a diverse variety of destinations in offering which range from religious monuments, historical/ archeological structures, wild life sanctuaries to scenic spots embroiled in the beauty of nature, the potential of this sector in Odisha to attract large numbers of tourists from both within the State, Country as well as from around the World is immense but has been grossly underutilized. While



Government schemes for upgrading the existing tourism infrastructure has been largely concentrated in and around the Coastal Districts of the State, the potential of tourist destinations in Western Odisha as indicated earlier has been largely under estimated resulting in its utter neglect by the development endeavors of the Welfare Governments (State and Center).

### **Objectives**

The present study has been undertaken with the premise that Western Odisha, possesses vast tourism potential most of which is untapped and aims at both unraveling the key issues affecting the tourism industry in the region as well as propose recommendations to overcome the identified predicaments. The major objectives of the study include the following: -

1. To provide an overview of the socio-economic and demographic composition of Western Odisha
2. To identify and reflect the genesis of development interventions in the region
3. To provide a brief account of the phenomenon of separatism in Western Odisha
4. To provide a generalist perspective of tourism in Western Odisha and major Tourist Destinations in the region
5. To provide a brief overview of the research methodology including the major techniques employed for obtaining the requisite information and undertaking the present study
6. To identify the critical issues affecting tourism in Western Odisha and propose measures for mitigating them

### **Methodology**

A participatory approach was adopted by the Researcher to both interact with the sample population in the study area as well as to exhibit a sense of deep involvement in the predicaments and issues being countered by the inhabitants of the region so that accurate and genuine information can be obtained which can assist in attaining the objectives of the study in general and help identify the key issues affecting the tourism sector in Western Odisha in particular. The following techniques were adopted by the Researcher for undertaking the present study: -

1. Observation Technique
2. Focused Group Discussion (FGD) Technique
3. Interview Technique
4. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) Technique
5. Case Study Technique

For the purpose of selecting the sample subjects for the study without any bias, simple random sampling technique was employed. Details relating to the study area and the sample population have been highlighted in the succeeding table:

**Table I Geographical Coverage and the sample**

District	Sample Blocks (Study Area)	Sample Population
Koraput	Narayanpatna	29
	Koraput	25
Rayagada	Muniguda	32
	Kalyansinghpur	
Kalahandi	Koksara	86
	Thuamulrampur	
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	

**Source: Research Design**

The total duration of time taken for the purpose of undertaking the study was 14 Weeks out of which 1 week was devoted towards review of literature, 2 weeks each for finalizing the chapter plan and techniques for data collection, 3 weeks for collection, analysis and interpretation of data and 2 weeks for formulation of the Research Paper.

## **MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY – CRITICAL ISSUES AFFECTING TOURISM IN WESTERN ODISHA**

The present study apart from obtaining the requisite information from the sample respondents has extensively referred to previous publications pertinent to the subject-matter. The major findings of the study reflected in the succeeding paragraphs have in fact been pooled by the Researcher by collating the responses generated from the sample respondents, the vital information obtained during the review of literature and the outcomes of the long-ranging interactions carried out during the course of the study with eminent subject-matter specialists in the spheres of Tourism, Tribal Development, Marketing etc.

- 1. Lack of proper infrastructure and communication facilities:** Connectivity via all-weather roads to all Villages located in Western Odisha appears to be a utopian dream even in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Lack of adequate infrastructure primarily in the form of roads connecting tourism destinations to urban conglomerations is not only repelling the wave of mostly domestic tourists but is also causing problems in installing communication amenities in the form of telephony towers for facilitating cellular phone usage in the region. The condition of most of the existing roads to tourist destinations is appallingly poor which makes travelling through them a bumpy experience.
- 2. Lack of requisite public transportation:** As public transport in the form of trains are extremely inadequate to most Railway Stations located within close



proximity to tourist destinations situated in Western Odisha, the only alternative means for conveyance to such locations is bus. As indicated above, extremist activities coupled up with the awful road conditions in the region is deterring both public as well as private transporters from operating in such perilous routes.

3. **Ongoing Extremist/ Internal Separatist Movements:** The ensuing armed insurgency and extremist movements in the form of Maoism and Naxalism in Western Odisha has established security concerns amongst most potential tourists who are too frightened to visit the region. In fact, this can be regarded as the root cause for the ongoing phenomenon of slow-paced development in the region as most welfare interventions are either not being carried out or are being carried out at a minimal scale out of the fear of separatists in the region.
4. **Lack of promotion of tourist destinations:** Tourist Destinations in Western Odisha have suffered lack of promotion both in the National as well as International arena primarily owing to the step-brotherly attitude that has been exhibited by the Government for their endorsement. In fact, a large number of sample respondents who happened to be tourists visiting destinations in Western Odisha were not aware of the existence of a substantial proportion of Tourist Spots in the region.
5. **Lack of offerings of comprehensive and affordable tourist packages by tour operators:** There are virtually no package offerings being made by any tour operator amalgamating key tourist destinations to aspiring tourists in Western Odisha. Coupled up with the poor documentation of tourist destinations and the consequent scanty information available concerning them in the region makes it even tougher to learn about major tourist spots in the region. Other associated issues such as lack of public transport and affordable hotels/ lodges in the region make it even more expensive for an aspiring tourist to visit locations of interest in Western Odisha. Similarly, an abysmally low rate of tourists visiting Western Odisha and the associated poor financial implications for the industry has been cited as the major reasons for not offering tourist packages by tour operators.

The findings of the study highlighted in the preceding paragraphs apart from exhibiting the scale of neglect that the tourism apparatus of Western Odisha has suffered primarily on account of the discriminative policies and schemes intended towards the disproportionate promotion of tourism and a host of other development endeavors in Coastal Odisha by the welfare governments also rationalizes the need for greater emphasis to be laid by both the State as well as the Centre to promote tourism in the region which apart from popularizing the prominent sightseeing destinations will also assist in the generation of livelihood opportunities through downstream employment. In view of the key and critical findings of the study and on premise that bolstering of the tourist set-up of Western Odisha cannot take place in isolation to overall welfare interventions in the region, the

recommendations for overcoming the aforementioned challenges have been proposed by the Researcher-author in the succeeding section of the Paper.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

One of the major observations made by the author during the course of the present study is that the venerable argument that separatism is nourished by impoverishment and food insecurity stands fallacious in certain instances; especially the ones where extremism is found to burgeon in some of the most lavishing and opulent tourist destinations in the region. All possible efforts were made to use the key findings of the study as the point of reference while conceptualizing the proposed recommendations to overcome the predicaments being encountered by the tourism industry in Western Odisha especially on account of the ongoing extremist insurgency in the region. The suggested interventions for addressing the identified critical issues of the tourism industry in the study area can be outlined under the following points: -

1. Considering the fact that development of the prevailing infrastructure and connectivity to Western Odisha is a pre-requisite to bolstering the region's tourism industry, efforts should be made by the Government to identify the vital roads passing through or leading to important Tourism Sites which are in immediate need for overhaul so that requisite renovation work on the same can be carried out on a conscientious basis. Essential infrastructure such as Guest Houses, Public Toilets, Party Halls, Parks and Gardens etc. should also be created in lucrative destinations in a phased manner for creating an ambience suitable for attracting tourists to the region
2. Corporate Houses can be involved in the proposed process of tourism restoration in Western Odisha which will not only instill a sense of belongingness amongst employees of such Organizations towards the tourist and heritage sites but will also lower the expenditure that will be incurred by the Government in pursuance of its endeavor for tourism revitalization in the region
3. With better road connectivity, public transport in the region encompassing within its fold bus services as well as train network should also be developed. Proposals should be made on the basis of meticulous analysis of available statistical data concerning tourists visiting Western Odisha for trains to operate between Stations located in the region and other major junctions across the Country. Similarly, services of premium buses for the comfort and benefit of luxury tourists should be introduced along with additional affordable buses aimed at catering to the needs of the budget class
4. Before the commencement of any major renovation activity within the broader mandate of the Integrated Tourism Development Agenda, all forms of separatism or armed insurgency in Western Odisha should be brought to a dead end. This will not only ensure security for the tourists attracting whom is the primary intent of the



proposed development interventions in and around the Tourism Destinations of the region but will also assure a protected milieu of operations for the contractors and laborers who will be assigned the daunting task of refurbishing the infrastructure and connectivity of the region

5. Efforts should be made by the Government to constitute a dedicated forum comprising of prominent citizens of Western Odisha, advertising agencies, regional legislators etc. for devising innovative means and measures for promoting Tourist Destinations situated in the region. Special monetary provisions should be kept in place to cater to the financial needs of the destination promotion endeavors of the forum by the Government so that a sense of financial independence is provided to it and the predicament of paucity of funds is not encountered by the entity
6. Once enabling circumstances in the form of better road connectivity, security and superior promotion of Tourism Destinations is created in the region, Tour Operators will definitely pitch in to financially benefit out of the burgeoning inflow of national and foreign tourists by offering a range of service packages

The suggestions proposed in the preceding paragraphs have been devised by the author both on the basis of the observations made during the course of the empirical exercise as well as the responses of the sample respondents to the questions put forth during the course of the empirical study. It is germane to mention here that the outcomes and learnings made from the grueling review of literature as well as the interactions carried out with renowned personalities in the spheres of Tourism, Tribal Welfare etc. has supplemented both the final set of recommendations drafted by the author as well as the profundity with which each of the identified critical issue has been addressed. It is sincerely hoped that consideration for implementation of the aforementioned suggestions can definitely assist the Government in its evocative endeavor towards strengthening the tourism base in Western Odisha.

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS – TOURISM IN WESTERN ODISHA AND THE TRIBAL DIMENSION**

As indicated earlier, Tribals account for a whopping 40 % (approximately) of the total population of Western Odisha most of whom are economically marginalized and inhabit the inaccessible and isolated mountainous pockets of the region which are also home to some of the most exquisite tourism destinations. The Odishan Tribes apart from possessing a unique intangible culture which varies from Community to Community are also regarded to be highly opulent with regard to their indigenous material culture encompassing their incredible dress patterns and their traditional forms of arts and crafts. Constructive endeavors towards boosting tourism in Western Odisha will not only develop the much-needed infrastructure in the Tribal-inhabited regions but the ensuing massive influx of tourists will also assist in augmenting this demand for tribal arts and crafts

which in turn will generate livelihood opportunities for this vulnerable section of population. It is pertinent to mention here that inspite of the sincere enterprise of the Government to provide alternative livelihood prospects for the Tribal people, the overall scenario relating to the economic destitution of the Community remains largely unaltered and one of the major reasons that can be attributed to the lack of success of Government schemes for Tribal livelihood empowerment is the lack of marketability of the indigenous arts and crafts and the disparaging role of the middle men who often siphon away a substantial proportion of the profit margin meant for the Tribes. It is strongly believed that with the boosting of tourism prospects in the region, demand for Tribal manufactured material cultural items is set to soar which will definitely act as a catalyzer in improving the prevailing economic scenario of the Community.

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# Struggle of the Tribals and Their Forest Rights in Odisha

**\*Naresh Rout**

## ABSTRACT

*It is the need of the hour to look at the ecology and tribal life in its reciprocal symbiotic forms. This paper intends to show up those concurrent social, economic, and environmental problems related to forest issues such as displacement, industrialization, mining and several protests in Odisha and their primary indicators which stand as barriers on the way of tribal development. It also highlights the people's viewpoint and expectations as a result to the problem to act rightly during the process of formulation of appropriate policies and programmes for the tribal people. The article puts the logical and considered plots to reveal the problems and their related issues as the background of the study. This work throws a few rays of light to the future research endeavors in this field. It may help the policy makers to know the defects in the policy & its process of implementation.*

**Key words:** Forest Rights, Forest Acts and Policies, Land Acquisition, Displacement and Rehabilitation

## Introduction:

Our state Odisha is endowed with vast forests extending over 37.34% of its geographical area with rich floral and faunal diversity. Diversity of forest ecosystem comprises natural teak, Sal and bamboo forests in the hinterland and lush green mangroves on coast. Thus the State occupies a prominent place in the national biodiversity map. The forests of the State can broadly be classified under three main types namely the Northern Tropical Semi-evergreen Forests, the Northern Tropical Moist deciduous Forests and the Northern Tropical Dry Deciduous Forests. In addition, we find some subsidiary and serial types due to edaphic, biotic and local climatic factors, but in limited occurrences.

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The state is reckoned to be backward due to poor economic growth and low human development indices. 47% of its population reportedly struggle below the poverty line. Nearly 85% BPL families belong to tribal community, which constitutes approximately 23% of the total population of the State. Majority of tribal families live in and around forests with which they have strong symbiotic and cultural linkages. Overall, 40% of the state's population depends on forests for their livelihood. Studies have revealed that forest resource contributes 25% to 52% to the household income of people living in and around forests. This fact underscores the vital role forests play in the economy of rural communities in general and tribal in particular. Yet the poverty ratio of forest rich districts is 70% as compared to the State's average of 52%.

The State is also richly endowed with mineral resources like coal, iron ores, bauxite that hold the potential of transforming it into an industrial hub and elevating standard of living of its people. Ironically, the mineral resources are found under the good forested lands. Proper use of mineral resources for development of the people of the state necessitates an environmentally sound approach that secures the ecological balance. Over the years the forests have suffered severe depletion and degradation due to growing demand for fuel wood, small timber, fodder, unhealthy shifting cultivation practices, uncontrolled grazing, and encroachments. The loss of tidal forests is a matter of grave concerns owing to its protective function in ecological stability of coastal regions. About 50% of the forest area of the State is estimated to be in various stages of degradation. Fortunately, a large number of communities are zealously protecting adjoining forests which harbours a promise for rejuvenation and conservation of forests.

### **Forest Acts and Policies in Odisha: Issues & Problems**

Odisha became a separate province in pre-independent political map of India on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1936 carved out of the then Bengal Presidency, Central Province, and Madras Presidency. By then, the Scientific Management of Forest had already started since 1883-84 in some parts of the Province under Indian Forest Act 1882 and during 1885-86 in some other parts under Madras Forest Act, 1882. The present shape of the State took place with the merger of feudatory states in the year 1948, and with ex-states of Mayurbhanj following in the year 1949. Management of most the forests of ex-Princely States vested in the Government at the time of merger and the process was completed in 1957 with the coming of the rest of ex-Jamindari forests. All the forests of the State were brought under the purview of the Indian Forest Act 1927 with suitable amendments to accommodate certain peculiarities prevailing in the ex-Princely States. After the merger, forest areas of the State aggregated to 25358.21 sq. miles constituting 42% of its geographical area. The Forest Enquiry Committee, 1959 in its report, however, has noted that most of the unreserved, the Khesra Forests, un-demarcated protected forests, unreserved lands, open forests of the State including those of ex-Jamindari areas are barren lands and hills without vegetation and actual forests is only about 25% of the geographical area.

In the matters of management of the forest resources the State has been following the National Forest Policy with some State specific initiatives. The Odisha Forest Act, 1972 replaced the Indian Forest Act, 1927 to bring about uniformity in the legal provisions throughout the State. The concept of social forestry was introduced in the early 80s to enable village communities to meet their requirement of fuel wood, fodder, and small timber from self-created and managed wood lots and thereby reduce pressure on natural forests. The Odisha Village Forest Rules 1985 accorded a formal recognition to the community's role in natural resource management. The community initiatives for protection of natural forests by then had also grown to cognizable proportion that ushered in the resolution for Joint Forest Management of 1990, ahead of the national initiative in 1990. Subsequently, JFM resolution has been revised from time to time to ensure effective community participation with greater autonomy. Several facilitating provisions have been put in place for promoting agro forestry. A liberalized NTFP (Non-Timber Forest Produce) policy has been enunciated in the year 2000 enabling unhindered collection and marketing of NTFPs by the people. Such path breaking policy initiatives are gradually empowering the local communities for managing the natural resources. Therefore, in Odisha number of acts and policies were implemented to have proper management in Forest sector and conservation.

The Odisha forest Act, 1972, is an act to consolidate and amend the laws relating to the protection and management of forests in the State. The Odisha Communal Forest and Private Lands (Prohibition of Alienation) Act, 1948 is an act to prohibit the alienation of communal, forest and private lands in the State of Odisha. The Odisha forest (amendment) Act, 1982 received the assent of the president on the 21st march 1983 and was first published in an extraordinary issue of the Odisha State Gazette, dated the 18th April 1983. This is an act to amend the Odisha Forest Act, 1972. the preamble of the Odisha Forest Contract Rules, 1966 is expedient to frame a comprehensive set of rules for the guidance of Forest Officer and forest contractors in making contracts for the sale and purchase of forest produce, for the simplification of the forms of forest contracts and for the protection of the rights of private persons in government forests. the following rules are made by the Government of Odisha in supersession of all previous orders and rules on the subject.

### **Forest & Social Protests in Odisha; Industry, Mining, Land Acquisition, Displacement and Rehabilitation:-**

Industrialization including mining activities has received wide acceptance as a major strategy for development all over the world. In the post-independence period, India embarked on a course of industrialization under the aegis of the public sector, which assumed "commanding heights". The private sector also did not lag far behind under a system called 'mixed economy'.

Odisha is predominantly an agricultural State where nearly seventy per cent of the working population depends on agriculture. The state has nearly forty per cent of



Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) population, which together make 9.78 million, apart from the people belonging to the Other Backward Castes (OBC). The State is rich in mineral resources. It has 5,428 million tons of iron ore deposit which is one-third of the total iron-ore deposits of the country. One-fourth of the coal deposit of the country is in the State, in addition to 98 to 99 and 63 percent of chromites and bauxite deposits respectively. Besides, the available infrastructure includes water in plenty, power at a cheap rate, 480 kms of coastline with one large port at Paradip and two proposed ports at Dhamra and Gopalpur.

In order to bring about economic development, the Government of late has launched a massive programme of industrialization. Against this background, the resistance movements of the local people against certain industrial units need to be probed deeply for the future of industrialization of the State. Voicing protests against industrialization by the people affected by it is not new in the State but the ongoing movements are different in that they have worked out an unprecedented unity among the tribal and backward masses against the industrial establishments as well as against the State Government, making all the major political parties watchful of the situation to derive political mileage.

### **I. The Kalinga Nagar Industrial Complex**

The Government of Odisha mooted the idea of developing a major industrial complex in the early nineties of the 20th century in the mineral-rich region of Jajpur covering areas like Dangadi, Duburi and Sukinda. The proposed complex has the capacity of producing 15 million tons of steel annually. The complex includes about 13 mineral-based industries such as iron and steel, stainless steel, sponge iron and ferrochrome etc. Iron ore and chromites are the raw materials for these industries, which are available in plenty in the region. The State Government has already signed a Memorandum of Understanding with nearly ten units spread over an area of 13,000 hectares. The major corporate houses such as the Tata, Visa, Jindal, Mesco and some others have already started their projects and a few of them are nearing completion. In pursuance of the MOU, the State Government would grant mining lease to the concerned industrial units and provide them with land for setting up their industries.

Further, the State Government has decided to acquire land from the local residents as well as to look into all matters relating to displacement, rehabilitation, and resettlement. However, all the efforts for industrialization are met with violent protest movements with increasing frequency. The tribal people inhabiting the region have repeatedly expressed their dissatisfaction over the payment of compensation, which ultimately resulted in loss of life of 13 persons on January 2, 2006. In the encounter that ensued between the police and the displaced people one Police Havildar was killed and four policemen were seriously injured while the compound wall of the 15,500 crore steel plant of the Tatas was under construction. The tribal people of Kalinga Nagar have launched an indefinite economic blockade on the National Highway 200 at Madhuban Chhak. They are not prepared to

work out any compromise with the State Government. So far all efforts of the Government to appease the tribes have failed, and the present situation is characterized by a deep emotional overtone. The place where the 13 victims of police firing were cremated has been named as Birbhumi.

## **2. Vedanta Alumina Limited at Lanjigarh**

The Niyamgiri Hill of Kalahandi district has a bauxite deposit of 1950 lakh tons. The district of Kalahandi is one of the least industrially developed parts of the country. In view of its special characteristics of backwardness, a special project of the Central Government called KBK (Kalahandi, Balangir, and Koraput) covering three former backward districts of Odisha is under implementation. Recently, the Vedanta Alumina Limited has started its work for setting up a plant at Lanjigarh and mining of bauxite from the Niyamgiri Hill complex. While efforts are being made to change a predominantly rural economy and hilly area into a major industrial complex, the people have been strongly resisting the work of setting up of the plant and mining of bauxite. A mass movement is going on since 2004. On April 7, 2004 the Niyamgiri Suraksha Samiti, an organization of tribal people of the area was formed to protect the forest, land and water of the area, giving the slogan, 'Vedant Hatao' (Remove Vedant). The people's cause has been taken up by another organization known as the Green Kalahandi. The Niyamgiri has a number of perennial hill streams, which are useful for agriculture and for the purpose of drinking water of the tribal people living in the foothills. It is also the source of the river Bansadhara that flows through Andhra Pradesh. The hill is a place of worship of the people belonging to the Dongaria Khond tribe. The proposed alumina project by the Vedanta group in Lanjigarh has provoked a political controversy between the ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and the opposition Congress. While the supporters of the BJD claim that the project will not only bring development in the area but also will generate employment, the opposition points out the possible adverse impact on Niyamgiri's bio-diversity.

## **3. POSCO-India Steel Plant at Paradip**

The people of Jagatsinghpur district in coastal Odisha have been actively engaged in a protest movement since June 2005 against POSCO (Pohong Steel Company)-a South Korean company planning to set up its 51000-crore steel plant. The company has also a plan to open a new private port of its own under the facilities of special economic zone. The Posco Pratirodh Sangram Samiti, an organization of the local people, has been spearheading the movement. The people living in 22 villages of three gram panchayats of Ersama block situated in the Ersamma Assembly constituency were likely to be displaced after the work starts. The Memorandum of Understanding with the South Korean major was signed on June 22, 2005 by the State Government under the MOU. It is proposed that the company would be given mining lease of 600 million tons of iron ore. A separate MOU has to be signed, to the extent of permitting the company to export iron ore. Further the



State Government would acquire 435 acres of private land for the plant which involves displacement of 20,000 to 25,000 of people.

Since then the villagers of three gram panchayats- Kujang, Dhinkia and Nuagaon, have been restive over the issue. The Samiti has raised a brigade of 1200 people who are ready to keep the movement alive. At times there have been violent clashes between the supporters of the proposed plant and the people, calling for intervention of the police. In one such incident which took place on April 11, 2006, at Dhinkia village, 11 persons were injured and nine activists were rounded off by the police. The people had put up barricades at the entry points to these villages which are guarded by women and children to prevent entry of Government and POSCO officials. Now-a-days, this project has been a greater challenge for Government to establish its objectives.

#### **4. Steel project of the TISCO**

The mining of bauxite in Odisha has given rise to virulent mass movements in the past. In the eighties of the past century, a strong movement of the local people completely stalled the mining activities of the Bharat Aluminum Company (BALCO), a Government of India undertaking with foreign technical collaboration. The BALCO initiated officially its mining work on May 2, 1983 that was scheduled to be completed by April, 1985. The project came to a grinding halt due to mass agitations of the local people, mostly tribals, despite the fact that the BALCO claimed to have invested 30 crores of rupees on the project. The people have raised a number of significant questions relating to their development. Starting with purely religious demands, their movement came to embrace larger issues such as environmental protection, ecological balance and eradication of poverty in a perpetually drought-prone area. Incidentally, the BALCO has been sold to the Sterile/Vedanta. The proposed steel project of the TISCO at Gopalpur, which involved acquisition of 3500 acres of land, and displacement of over 2000 people in the late Nineties met the same fate. It appears history is being repeated.

In exploring the literature on these emerging issues we found several books and magazines. One of the books is *Tribals of Odisha: The Changing Socio Economic Profile* (Ed.) by B.C. Ray, Gyan Books, 2009 states that Odisha is the home of 62 scheduled tribes but comparatively very little research has been done on the socio-economic life of the tribals. His attempt is related to combine the studies and analyses by historians, anthropologists, psychologists, economists and literary critics on the changing Society of the tribals. From the historical perspective, the author moves from Mutual interactions of non-tribal and tribal and tribal culture, absorption of Gods and Goddesses from the tribal fold to Hindu pantheon to the abandoned ritual of human sacrifice. The modern processes put up before the tribals by western-urban-industrial-democratic-model, heralding unprecedented change in tribal lifestyle have come in for Academic scrutiny. As a combined effort of many academicians the book gives a wide coverage on the Study of Odishan tribals, to make it worthwhile addition to the available material on the subject.

The book named "*Social Ecology of Forest Resources*" by Bibhuti Bhusan Malik, Kalpaz Publication, New Delhi, 2004 tried to look at ecology and tribal life in its reciprocal symbiotic forms. The interrelationship of physical, biological and cultural features of a region is the subject matter of social ecology which is the essence of this book. Human beings, especially tribal people try to adapt themselves to particular geographical and cultural environment and in doing so they have to control the environment according to their requirements. Forest-trees and common property resources are basic to tribal communities directly benefit them like a foster mother and fulfill their biological, cultural and emotional needs. For food, tribal people are mostly dependent on forests by collecting nuts, wild fruits, vegetables, leaves, flower, roots, stems, honey, wild animal and insects and so on. He also attempted on the study to explore the inter-linkages and interdependency of tribal on forests and forest produces.

The Book "*Contemporary Society, Tribal Studies*", Georg Pfeffer, Deepak Kumar Behera, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1999, Vol-III, Chapter -7 attempts on proposed projects and emerging protests in Odisha such as the case of Alumina Refineries in Rayagada and Kalahandi Districts of Odisha. This book is also portrays about one of the important components of the national planning involved installation of heavy industries, the Ecological Price, rise of protest movement, the role of NGO and rehabilitation and blasting of mining at NALCO Project of Damonjodi in Odisha.

The Book "*Development-induced Displacement, Rehabilitation and Resettlement in India: Current Issues and Challenges*" by Sakarama Somayaji and Smrithi Talwar, Routledge Contemporary South Asia, USA 2011 elicits ideas about compulsory land acquisition and involuntary displacement of communities for a larger public purpose captures the tension of development in the modern state, with the need to balance the interests of the majority while protecting the rights of the minority. In India, informal estimates of involuntary resettlement are estimated to be around 50 million people over the last five decades, and three-fourths of those displaced still face an uncertain future. Growing public concern over the long-term consequences of this has led to greater scrutiny of the rehabilitation and resettlement process, particularly for large development projects. This book examines a number of new policy formulations put in place at both the central and state levels, looking at land acquisition procedures and norms for rehabilitation and resettlement of communities. It brings together contributory analysis by some of the country's most engaged administrators, academicians and activists in the field, and is a useful contribution to Development Studies.

Another book "*Local Forest Management: The Impacts of Devolution Policies*", Edited By David Edmunds, Eva Wollenberg, Camden High Street, London, 2004 reflects some ideas on the criteria for evaluating the impact of devolution policies on local decision-making space reflect our understanding of what local forest users consider meaningful,



based on past field experience and readings. It focuses on the careful and illuminating case studies of the effects of devolution policies on the management of forests in several Asian countries, the studies demonstrate that, contrary to the aim of such policies, they increased.

The book "*Changing Tribal Life in British Odisha* by K. Majumdar" traces the British Government's Policy towards the aboriginal people of Odisha, particularly the Kandhs, and the reaction it caused in the people. The British effort to "tame" the tribals by armed measures was followed by their effort to "civilize the savages" by education and widen the scope and scale of their acculturation with "civilized" people in the neighboring tracts. This caused a great change in tribal life, society and polity. Tribal reaction to this externally-induced change is varied between stubborn resistance and grudging acquiescence, depending on the pace and extent of the change.

*Forestry Debate and Draft Forest Act: Who Wins, Who Loses*: Ramachandra Guha: Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 29, No. 34 (Aug. 20, 1994) attempts on a careful study of the government's draft new forest act, to replace the Indian Forest Act of 1927, shows that its real aims (i) to restrict people's rights in reserved forests, which are owned and managed by the state; and (ii) to sharply limit the area or extent of village forests in which local communities could exercise more effective and independent control.

*Social-Ecological Research in India: A 'Status' Report*, Ramachandra Guha, Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 32, No. 7 (Feb. 15-21, 1997), pp. 345-352 tells about focusing on the disciplines of sociology and social anthropology, but noting contributions by economists and historians and by socially sensitive scientists as well, this essay studies the contributions of social science to the environmental debate in India. The emergence and consolidation of social scientific work on the natural environment, its strengths and its silences, are explained with reference to broader political and intellectual processes in the history of independent India.

### **People and Forests**

The book named "*Communities, Institutions, and Governance*", Clark C. Gibson, Margaret A. McKean, and Elinor Ostrom (Ed), The MIT Press, 2000 describes about unplanned deforestation, which is occurring at unsustainable rates in many parts of the world, can cause significant hardships for rural communities by destroying critical stocks of fuel, fodder, food, and building materials. It can also have profound regional and global consequences by contributing to biodiversity loss, erosion, floods, lowered water tables, and climate change. Within the academic and policy-making environment, the subject of how to manage forests is addressed at a number of levels. Important issues that are examined in this book include growth parameters, optional harvest and are decisions based on species compositions, time horizons, timber and non-timber values, dominant or multiple use features, opportunity cost of land and so on. The book also tells how a remarkable component like friends and trees and living beings brought about a change in Odisha.

## Conclusion

The State Forest Policy is expected to bring a new era in the Management and Development of Forest and Wild life resources aiming at realization of their Ecological Services, providing Livelihood Security for the Forest Dependent Communities and meeting the needs in respect of Timber and other forest Products of the growing population. However, to keep the sector to be dynamic and responsive to the need and aspirations of the people it needs to be revisited at regular interval. The interrelationship of physical, biological and cultural features of a region is the subject matter of social ecology. Forest-trees and common property resources are basic to tribal communities, directly benefiting them, and fulfilling their biological, cultural and emotional needs. The rehabilitation and resettlement policy needs to be formulated in such a way that the people feel that they are not the losers. There should be a survey of the problems and prospects of forest sector to explore the inter-linkages and interdependency of tribal people on forests and forest produce. However, it is the need of the hour to look at ecology and tribal life in its reciprocal symbiotic forms. This paper is intended to show up those concurrent social, economic and environmental problems related to forest issues such as displacement, industrialization, mining and several protests in Odisha and their primary indicators which stand as barriers on the way of tribal development.

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# Indigenous knowledge of Shifting Cultivation: Observations on three Primitive Tribal Communities in Odisha

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## ABSTRACT

*Shifting cultivation in the traditional manner is highly diversified; it is more stable and reliable for the farmer than specialized cultivation. Economic self-sufficiency protects ecological integrity and viability in ways more important than simply maintaining diversity. The survival is contingent upon maintenance, rather than the exploitation of the larger community of which they know themselves to be only parts. In short traditional shifting cultivation is a system which is well adapted to the tropical forest environment; it helps maintain the biological diversity of the forest and often provides significant benefit to wildlife population. The maintenance of such system is of considerable importance to modern form of development.*

*The shifting cultivation is operative chiefly in the regions where more technologically advanced system of agriculture have not become economically or culturally possible or in regions where the land has not yet been appropriated by people with greater political or cultural power. It is destructive of natural resources when operated inefficiently and not inherently destructive than other systems of agriculture when these are operated inefficiently. It is also considered a residual system of agriculture largely replaced by other systems except where retention or practice is expedient.*

*The authors in this paper have made an attempt to explore the indigenous knowledge and traditional knowledge by trying to understand the community perceptions relating to shifting cultivation. The authors have analyzed the community perceptions on a conceptual and theoretical understanding of indigenous knowledge. In this attempt the authors have studied three Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PTGs), namely, Dongaria Kondh (Bissamcuttack Block), Kutia Kondh (Tumudibandh Block) and Lanjia Saora (Gunupur Block) in southern Odisha for whom shifting cultivation is a way of life.*

**Key words:** Shifting cultivation, swiddening, indigenous knowledge, Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups

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## Introduction

Odisha is home to 62 tribal communities who are at different levels of development yet possess unique repository of indigenous knowledge basing upon their age old practices for their survival needs. The indigenous practices of natural resource management as applicable to agriculture, forestry, human and animal health, soil conservation, water harvesting, and many other sectors has, in matter of fact, preserved grandeur of indigenous knowledge that can be suitably applied in present day context. Application of indigenous knowledge for rural development is an emerging paradigm especially for resource conservation and sustainable use. From the long experience of cultivation, the traditional communities have acquired enormous working knowledge in fields of classification, codification, accumulation and dispensation of knowledge on cultivation. Their understanding of environment and sustainable resource management is largely embedded in their socio-cultural life and manifested in their interactions with the socio-ecological complex they are part of. These knowledge systems reflect their perception of ecologically sensitive interactions with local ecosystems and the changing paradigms under the spell of modern technical knowledge and management practices.

Shifting cultivation is one such area of their interaction with the forest ecosystem which showcases age old wisdom in managing environment security and food security and disseminates treasures of indigenous knowledge systems. It is one of the primary means of earning livelihoods for many tribal communities inhabiting mountainous regions of the state. It is synonymous with slash and burn cultivation, swiddening, *jhum*, fallow farming, *podu*, *nella* and many other local denominations. It is a flexible and highly adaptive means of production. In Odisha, as per an estimate, the extent of shifting cultivation has been spread over 118 Tribal Sub-Plan blocks of which 62 comes under shifting cultivation zone and 56 are partially covered.

On the basis of degree of dependence on swiddens, L.K. Mohapatra (1983, vol2, ix) comprehended four types of dependence on shifting cultivation; exclusive dependence, major dependence, contingent dependence and marginal dependence. With respect to each category of dependence he has analyzed the community-wise and individual-wise dependence on shifting cultivation portraying the situations at which the community or the individual may be categorized under the above said dependency categories. Most of the tribes in Odisha who take up shifting cultivation as a means of earning a livelihood fall under the category of exclusive dependence and major dependence as shifting cultivation connote a subsistence economy.

Because shifting cultivation in the traditional manner is highly diversified, it is more stable and reliable for the farmer than specialized cultivation. Economic self-sufficiency protects ecological integrity and viability in ways more important than simply maintaining diversity. The survival is contingent upon maintenance, rather than the exploitation of the larger community of which they know themselves to be only parts. In short, traditional shifting cultivation is a system which is well adapted to the tropical forest environment; it helps maintain the biological diversity of the forest and often provides significant benefit to the wildlife population. The maintenance of such system is of considerable importance to modern form of development.

The authors in this paper have made an attempt to explore the indigenous knowledge and traditional knowledge by trying to understand the community perceptions relating to shifting cultivation. The authors have analyzed the community perceptions on a conceptual and theoretical understanding of indigenous knowledge. In this attempt the authors have studied three Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PTGs), namely, Dongaria Kondh (Bissamcuttack Block), Kutia Kondh (Tumudibandh Block) and Lanjia Saora (Gunupur Block) in southern Odisha for whom shifting cultivation is a way of life.

### **Understanding Indigenous Knowledge and its applicability**

Indigenous knowledge means that something is originating locally and performed by a community or society in this specific place. It emerges as peoples' perceptions and experience in an environment at a given time and is a continuous process of observation and interpretation in relation to the locally-acknowledged everyday rationalities and transcendental powers (Seeland, 2000). Although 'indigenous knowledge' and 'traditional knowledge' are used as synonyms, yet they vary conceptually and contextually in certain respects. Knowledge is to be said indigenous, if it is bound to local experiences and takes its local world perhaps not as the only existing, but as the most relevant of all. In other words, indigenous knowledge is location and culture-specific knowledge. Local knowledge in this connection may be understood as knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society. Indigenous knowledge contrasts with the international knowledge system generated by universities and research institutions. Being influenced by global or western knowledge, one tends to forget that over the centuries human beings have been producing knowledge to keep a balanced relationship with their natural and social environment in order to survive. Indigenous knowledge refers to a large body of accumulated knowledge with which the people are able to manage their natural resources in order to subsist on a long-term basis. Some other relevant definitions of indigenous knowledge are:

...(It) is a cumulative body of knowledge and beliefs, handed down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with their environment. Further, traditional ecological knowledge is an attribute of societies with historical continuity in resource use practices; by and large, these are non-industrial or less technologically advanced societies, many of them indigenous or tribal (Grenier, 1998).

... (It is) the unique, traditional, local knowledge existing within and developed around the specific conditions of men and women indigenous to a particular geographic area (Johnson, 1992).

... (It is) a body of knowledge built by a group of people through generations living in close contact with nature. It includes a system of classification, a set of empirical observations about the local environment, and a system of self-management that governs resource use (Studley, 1998).

... there is consensus amongst scientists using various terms that such knowledge: i) is linked to a specific place, culture or society; ii) is dynamic in nature; iii) belongs to



groups of people who live in close contact with natural systems; and iv) contrasts with "modern" or "western formal scientific" knowledge." (Warren, 1991)

Indigenous knowledge systems got a face-lift when International policy regime on nature and biodiversity conservation considered it as an instrument to achieve sustainability in the World Conference on Science, organised by UNESCO and the International Council for Science (ICSU) in 1999 in Budapest, two principal documents - the 'Declaration on Science and the Use of Scientific Knowledge' and the 'Science Agenda contribution of: '...traditional and local knowledge systems as dynamic expressions of perceiving and understanding the world', but also point to the need: ... to preserve, protect, research and promote this cultural heritage and empirical knowledge.' A major impetus was given to an international understanding on Indigenous Knowledge through the conference on 'Building Bridges with Traditional Knowledge – International Summit Meeting on Issues Involving Indigenous Peoples, Conservation, Sustainable Development and Ethno science' that was held in Honolulu, Hawaii in June 2001.

### **Indigenous Knowledge in Shifting Cultivation and Scientific Opinions**

The basic features of shifting cultivation include clearing of fields primarily by felling, cutting, slashing and burning and using fire to dispose of vegetative debris after drying; human labour chiefly operative; labour pattern frequently co-operative; many different systems in crop planting including multiple cropping and specialized cropping; use of yields primarily for subsistence; use of vegetative cover, as soil conditioner and source of plant nutrient for cropping cycle; when efficiently operated soil erosion occurs to the least; soil depletion not more serious than that under other systems of agriculture. All the processes and systems are based on experience based understanding of the communities and the practitioners are masters of the art. The shifting cultivation is operative chiefly in the regions where more technologically advanced system of agriculture have not become economically or culturally possible or in regions where the land has not yet been appropriated by people with greater political or cultural power. It is destructive of natural resources when operated inefficiently and not inherently destructive than other systems of agriculture when these are operated inefficiently. It is also considered a residual system of agriculture largely replaced by other systems except where retention or practice is expedient.

The New Agriculturist on-line made a literature survey to comprehend different scientific observations from research and studies on shifting cultivation from ecological and livelihoods perspective as:

- Shifting cultivation is a style of forest-based land use around which myths and hostile assumptions have often clustered, especially among foresters. In fact, research studies on shifting cultivation in the tropics point, rather, to the strength and resilience of many of these systems, the high returns to labour they offer; and, as

importantly, the species enrichment and biodiversity conservation they allow. (Reporting DFN Mailing 21, ODI)

- Migrants tend to use non-traditional and non-sustainable practices. Many are new to farming, without the benefit of indigenous knowledge about the land and vegetation, and they indiscriminately clear forest areas, leaving no tree stumps to regenerate. They often plant crops that are unsuited to the acid soils and the hot and humid climate. Migrant farmers continue to crop after grass weeds have established themselves, further exhausting the soil so that recovery time is lengthened, hindering forest regeneration. *Alternatives to Slash-and-Burn - A Global Initiative, ICRAF publication*
- Governments have not been successful in dealing with swidden systems nor in coming up with solutions. There is a need to empower local communities to participate more fully in problem diagnosis and in generating innovations for more sustainable agro-ecosystem productivity and ultimately to manage their own resource base. *IDRC, Comparative Analysis on Shifting Cultivation*
- Upland people practising various types of shifting cultivation are also being forced to reduce traditionally maintained fallow periods and are clearing more forest lands to compensate for losses in food supply. While the plight of mountain people is unmistakably getting worse; it appears that development policies have been highly insensitive to mountain conditions and have also contributed to some of these problems. The need for sustainable solutions is urgent. Efforts are needed at different levels and with the growing partnership at different levels, important breakthroughs are being made in different areas. Most of these success stories are being produced by the mountain people themselves with a little bit of help from outside. The future of the mountains lies in ensuring that the maximum numbers of people are supported to help themselves. *The Hindu Kush-Himalayas: Finding Sustainable Solutions, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development*

Swidden has generally been seen as cultivation and not culture by those who are closely concerned with the 'degradation of environment'. To bring the concept of culture in their frame of reference is as essential as bringing the concept of environment in their domain of culture. Practitioners of shifting cultivation have always been viewed from the perspective of outsider who treated them either as a different and a closed social system or viewed them as a satellite system having deleterious effects on their society and surroundings. (Atal & Bannagen, 1983:2)

Considering the nature of economy and economy of nature in relation to shifting cultivation it can be said that it is not completely uneconomic or destructive to environment (Jena, et.al. 2000). Strangely enough some of the environment specialists took the stand that in the kind of environment in which this kind of cultivation is practiced, it is the most rational form of cultivation, as no other form of cultivation will be possible or economical ... the so called innocent people know enough about the environment as they take good care of those trees and plants that are regarded by them as useful. 'In traditional swiddens, agricultural tools are minimal, ploughs are not used and even the



harvest is often reaped by hand without the use of a blade. Energy returns for energy inputs in traditional swiddens is quite high' (Rappaport, 1972 cf. Jena, et.al. 2000).

In ecological terms, swidden cultivation is characterized by its high degree of integration into the natural tropical forest ecosystem, whose characteristics it conserves to a considerable extent ... it is the ecologically viable agricultural strategy to have been developed thus far, on a large scale in tropical rain forests, and attempts to apply intensive agricultural techniques brought from other regions have generally been dismal failures, resulting only in the destruction of the ecological balance of the natural rainforest (Seymour-Smith, 1986).

Shifting cultivation comprises a range of highly variable and site specific systems that have developed in response to local environmental and cultural conditions. The essentials are that fields are rotated rather than crops and that a forest fallow returns fertility to the soil. Sedentary swidden agriculturists have a strong interest in maintaining the fertility of the village territory and practise long term conservation measures which contribute to biological diversity (Mc Neely, 1989).

### **Shifting cultivation by the Kondh and the Saora of Odisha**

The **Kuttia Kondh** have been shifting cultivators since times immemorial. This method of cultivation is part of their way of life and is remembered in the mythology of the tribe. The Kui terminology for the practice of shifting cultivation is *nellakama*, *bagada* (cleared hill for cultivation) or *dongar chasa* (hill cultivation). References are made to shifting cultivation in cosmogonic myth of the Kuttia Kondh. This mythological background is an important reason for the Kuttia Kondh to continue with shifting cultivation as a way of maintaining their culturally distinct lifestyle and identity in accordance with the traditions of their ancestors. The *Kui Gaani* describes some mythical views of shifting cultivation, although today, much of this myth can only be recalled by the elderly members of the tribe. They refer to the myth, *Kui Gaani*, as a means to justify their traditional cultivation practices.

The myth also alludes to the fact that the patches of forest selected for shifting cultivation should contain a *Dharnivali* and a bamboo bush. If bamboo bushes are not found, either the field is abandoned or bamboo saplings are planted in the field. The presence of bamboo as a site for worship is offered to *Dharni Penu* is essential. It is said that bamboo came into existence near *Sapangada* - the mythical place of origin of the tribe, from the hair of *Nerandali* when she was taking a bath after emerging from *Sapangada*. The Kuttia Kondh believe that a *dharni* stone is found in a newly cleared forest patch, must have been left there by their ancestors who had cultivated the area before. As the cultivators require the permission of *Dharni Penu* before they clear a new patch of forest, she is therefore appeased with an offering of blood from an animal sacrifice. It is believed that without the blood offering, the deity becomes angry and can inflict harm by producing poor yields in swidden plots and can inflict disease and other misfortune on the people. This is indicative of the fact that shifting cultivation is co-eval

and co-existent with the Kuttia Kondhs. It is culturally and religiously tuned preventing the community to take up the practice just anywhere in their vicinity.

The **Dongaria Kondh** economy centres around shifting cultivation, plain land cultivation and horticulture. The Dongarias' increasing interest in horticulture has brought shifting cultivation to a limit but for their minimum subsistence, they depend mostly upon shifting cultivation. Though horticulture has a significant position in the Dongaria Kondh economy, but it does not fetch the right market price as it should, due to various factors. Although horticulture surpasses shifting cultivation in the rate of production, yet at the subsistence level, shifting cultivation maintains its importance as it was in the past. They claim that, in the past, when the Jungle was dense, they depended on cultivation on hills for subsistence. The Dongaria believe that food gathering and hunting was the first stage of economic activity; further development began after that occupational shift from hunting and food gathering to the practice of shifting cultivation. This also indicates technological progress and preference for earning a livelihood. The next step of development marked their orientation towards horticulture, although shifting cultivation continued. Some decades ago, the Dongarias started plain land cultivation. While these stages of development in the Dongaria economy involved technological changes, the social system did not change considerably. In remote pockets, the social system, traditional pattern of distribution of economic means and the socio-political organisation have more or less remained constant.

Similar to the Kuttia Kondhs, the Dongaria also have socio-political and religious practices specific to shifting cultivation. Shifting cultivation is also rooted in the Dongaria myth of origin. To convert a patch of forest to swiddens, the Dongarias make an ecological assessment of the area in terms of vegetation, soil moisture, nutrient conditions and suitability for shifting cultivation. After the ecological considerations, the cultural condition is taken into consideration. The forest should have a *dharni* altar established by earlier settlers. The Hill God must permit the people to cultivate the site. Rituals are performed to seek the permission of the deity. On getting the permission they slash the vegetation, otherwise, they never dare to take the risk of inviting the wrath of the deity. Then comes the economic consideration according to which the hill should have enough cultivable land to be divided among all the families in a village or a group of families of bigger size who wish to cultivate it. If ecological and cultural conditions are found favourable then the economic consideration becomes less significant. On the other hand, if the cultural consideration does not go in their favour, the other two conditions even being favourable becomes meaningless.

The **Lanjia Saoras**, traditionally, were hunters, food gatherers and shifting cultivators. In course of time when swiddening became less productive, they started terrace cultivation along with swiddening. For the Lanjia Saora shifting cultivation (*Barooh loom* or *Bagada chas*) has been their way of life. Most of them possess patches of swiddens inherited individually. It is said that the community has inherited the practice from their supreme ancestor *Kittung-Radab* who started cultivating the hill slopes to eke out a living.



The selection of a site for shifting cultivation is mainly considered on two grounds; vegetation and soil. Black soil is the preferred one as it is known to be very fertile and can assure a good harvest. Dense vegetation with good population of timbers is not preferred, for it would require lot of labour force to clear the patches. Therefore, a fertile land with bushy vegetation is cut and cleared or swiddening. The availability of labour force in a family is the other consideration for deciding the extent of land that could be cleared. During site selection the slope consideration decides the land use pattern. If the slopes are relatively wider they are preferred for terrace cultivation. However, such slopes are not immediately converted into terraces. After a series of cropping cycles under swiddening practice when the yield decreases then people convert it to terraces and take up paddy cultivation.

More than shifting cultivation, the Saoras are well known for their expertise in terrace cultivation. They exhibit a high degree of indigenous skill, ingenuity and technological outfit for preparing the terraces with inbuilt water management system. The terraces are built right up the beds of the hill streams and ascend hundreds of feet from the depth of valleys to the hill slopes and even up to the hill tops.

The Lanjia Saora exhibit technological up-gradation in farming practices in the indigenous way. They have integrated shifting cultivation, terrace cultivation and horticulture in a way that builds a viable economic base for the community with both subsistence and cash crops.

### **Ecological perceptions: Slope land classification and cropping pattern**

On the hill slope Dongaria cultivate a selection of crops. The bushy forest covering the upper part of the hill (*mundeni*), however, is not slashed. On the other hand the slash and burn method is applied to the tops of low hills or hillocks. Immediately below the unslashed forest, in the area called *madre gandre*, seasonal crops such as cereals, pulses, vegetables and oil seeds are grown. The next layer down, called *penda gandre* is reserved for perennials, particularly for the fruit bearing species such as citrus, mango, jackfruit, banana, pineapple, and other tree crops without disturbing any naturally growing useful tree species. The Dongarias have the perception that a better harvest results from seasonal crops if they are between two dense vegetation patches (i.e. between *penda* and *mundeni*). Below the *penda gandre* is the area called *penda* where vegetables and oil seeds are cropped. Occasionally, the *penda* is levelled out for paddy cultivation. The Dongarias have rich ecological perception of slope and soil that is instrumental in crop planning at different levels of a slope.

For the Kuttia Kondhs, after slashing and burning of vegetation, marking the individual field area is considered very important. Individual fields are marked out by crop fencing. Usually the castor seeds, maize seeds, and sometimes sorghum seeds are used as fence lines for plot demarcation, for these species are tall species and hence, if they are planted with a particular spacing they make a distinguishing fence. The border of one field planted with castor seeds of one cultivator follows the plantation of maize and sorghum for the other person whose area begins from the same boundary. The other side boundary of the second person may be planted with castor seeds. It goes on like



this to differentiate patches of individual fields. The plantation of castor, pigeon pea, maize and sorghum as boundary species is beneficial as they take relatively longer periods to complete their life cycle in comparison to other crops. Maize which has a shorter life cycle compared to others can be collected easily on maturing from the boundary fence. This also keeps the other crops undisturbed. Following the boundary species, all other crops are sown which include other pulses and vegetables like cucumber, pumpkin, etc. Seeds of yams are put in dibbled holes on the boundary fence, because its coiling system can easily extend to castor plants (Jena, et.al. 2006). Cow pea is planted little after the castor and pigeon pea have been planted so as to prevent the young twigs of the later from the coiling system of the former. The pulses and other vegetables thus are planted at random inside the boundary. The ginger, turmeric if planted is made into pure cultures with which the bird chilli species also share the space. The plotting scheme of the Kuttia Kondhs are almost the same like the Dongaria Kondh, but the major distinction observed is that the Kuttia Kondh have not added the fruit growing species in their swidden system.

The Lanjia Saora community divide a hill into three parts: *Amutti* is top of the hill, *Trangdi* refers to the middle area, and *Baseng* refers to the foothill. In their practice of shifting cultivation (*Barooh loom*), the middle area of the hill is called *Baroon* where people grow multiple crops. In this context *Trangdi* and *Baroon* are synonymous. The foothills and the region between the foothill and swiddening area are terraced and the terraced lands are called *Dunkeli*. *Baseng* and *Dunkeli* are also synonymous in usage. In general, *Baroon* is the space where swiddening is done, in *Dunkeli* wet or terrace cultivation is done, in unterraced *Baseng* cash crops like mustard, niger are cultivated. The horticultural and fruit bearing species are given space in *Baroon* and *Baseng*.

These communities grow varieties of crops in a mixed cropping system that includes cereals, pulses, oil seeds, vegetables and spices. The crops include cereals like *Panicummiliare* (little millet), *Eleusinecoracana* (Finger millet/ ragi), *Sorghum vulgare* (Sorghum), *Pennisetumtyphoides* (Bajra), *Zea mays* (Maize), *Oryzasativa* (Rice); pulses like *Vignaindica* (Cow pea), *Vigna* species, *Phaseolusmungo* (Black gram), *Cajanuscajan* (Arhar/ yellow dal); oil seeds like *Ricinuscommunis* (Castor), *Guizotiaabyssinica* (Niger), *Brassica campestris* (Mustard); spices like *Capsicum frutescens* (Bird chilli), *Curcuma longa* (Turmeric), *Zingiberofficinalis* (Ginger), etc; vegetables like *Cucumissativa* (Cucumber), *Cucurbita maxima* (Pumpkin), *Lagenaria vulgaris* (Bottle gourd), *Dioscoreasps* (Yam), *Ipomeabatatas* (Sweet potato), *Manihotesculenta* (Tapioca/ Cassava), etc.

### **Rationality of plotting along the slope than across the slope**

While distributing the hill slopes for swiddens, the decision makers first decide upon the area that is to be slashed leaving a reasonable measure of forests on the hill top. The slashing area is then vertically divided into plots corresponding to the requirement of individual families in a village. The preference for the vertical plots is mostly considered on ecological basis (Jena, et.al., 2002). Unlike the horizontal plots the vertical plots have the significance that each family gets almost the same kind of ecological space for cultivating multiple crops suitable to slopes and altitudes. In such a design the water



management during rains is also well planned. As slopes at different elevations are cropped with different cropping density and there is fair arrangement of perennials and annuals on the slopes, water flows down from ridge area to valleys with minimal soil erosion. As such the water logging is avoided. Considering the browsing and predatory habit of wild life, plotting along the slope is preferred to plotting across the slope. The wildlife movement usually happens from the hill top where forest is not disturbed. Hence they usually browse upon the crops on the slope closer to the forest at top of the hill. Hence, in a plotting design across the slope, the farmer whose plot is located closer to the forest suffers the loss. In contrast, in a plotting along the slope scheme, the loss gets distributed to all the cultivators. Moreover, by constructing sentinel huts on the upper side of the slope it is easier to guard the crops on a longitudinally divided plot. Hence, horizontal plotting is not rational in the local context and its consideration also guides the cropping pattern at different levels of the slope.

### **Traditional distribution patterns and customary land governance**

One of the basic features of shifting cultivation has been frequent shifting of cropped fields, normally in some kind of sequence in land control, resting in special social groupings under customary laws, but sometimes occurring under other legal institutions of land control. In this context it is important to examine the traditional distribution patterns of swidden lands under customary rules, the power and authority of formal and informal village councils and other social institutions and legal instruments.

The swidden plots are distributed by the village council to lineage groups which distributes it to its constituent households in consideration to the family labour force, as understood in case of several tribal communities practicing shifting cultivation. Once distributed the lands are inherited to fore-generations at the family level. In the early days, particularly at the time of setting up a settlement, one enjoys relative liberty to cultivate as large an area as is manageable considering manpower available in the family.

In the Dongaria Kondh community, the swiddens (*neta* and *bada*) are divided among member families by the clan heads. The inheritance of such lands is maintained in the patrilineal order. Patches of lands under possession of father is equally divided among his sons after his death. In some cases daughters also get shares from their father's land. If a man has only daughter (s) or if a daughter is divorced or widowed then she may get share from her father's landed property. There are different patterns of land distribution. There can be village-wise distribution, clan-wise distribution and *punja* (title group) wise distribution. PTG Villages are found exclusively with one clan or with one dominant clan. In a village-wise distribution there is always a boundary between two villages. Keeping the boundary in view, hills are distributed among respective village communities. People of a single clan or different clans residing in a village can occupy a hill land, convert it to swidden plots without any restriction. In the Dongaria Kondh community, a rational distribution of hill land was exercised long ago to minimize discrimination in terms of early settlers and late settlers; proximity and distant location; dominant *punja* and others. Thus, hill lands were first distributed among clans, then among *punjias* and then among families. However, some patches of land were kept as

buffer land to be distributed to new families who may come from outside irrespective of their clan membership. In case the number of families increased along with the need for more land, further grant of land is made possible through the village level decision making body where *jani* and *mandal* allot the required land if available.

In the Lanjia Saora community, traditionally, the hills have been distributed among *Birinda* or extended families (Patnaik, N, 1989, 1993). Members of a particular *birinda* used to have swiddens exclusively on a hill and no outsider was allowed to share the hill for cultivation. An individual family who has been cultivating a plot continues to own it as long as it is capable of cultivating it. Every family or every household possesses a limited number of plots around the village. This personal possession is hereditary. Ultimately, the father's plot is divided among the sons. However, the base rule for possession right over a land depends on availability of family labour force. In this consideration, in the past, the families who had more labour force could take big chunk of swidden land under their possession. Since the swidden lands have become very limited, over the last three to four decades hardly people have been able to add more lands to their existing possession. Since, initially the swiddens had been distributed *Birinda* wise, the *Birinda* has larger control over the land use patterns and this has limited diverse land use practices in the swiddens.

### **Positive sides of shifting cultivation**

Old traditional swiddens have gradually become converted to fruit orchards giving it a forest like structure. Preservation of timber plants in and around the swidden serves as a seed reservoir for endemic species. Sophisticated fire control mechanism such as fire breaks, fire fighters, coordinated burning is maintained. Swidden soil is often more moist than adjacent forest soil. Careful rotation of swiddens is maintained looking at land-man ratio. Bush fallowing period of different intervals is practiced to allow flow of nutrients to reserve the trend towards leaching and be recycled through burning. Careful control of weeds is remarkably done. Minimal disturbance of top soil in cropping practice help minimizing erosion. It is a sound practice as there is the least risk of total crop failure even due to drought or excessive rainfall because variety of seeds are cropped together and the crops mature at various intervals of time. People are keen observers on the ratio of labour input to productivity and hence, when productivity decreases in relation to labour input, they leave the land for fallowing till the fertility is regained. Unproductive swiddens are converted to permanent orchards thereby introducing new varieties and land use patterns. Above all, subsistence crops and cash crops are taken simultaneously from the same patch of land.

### **Conclusion**

Swidden cultivation, as an indigenous knowledge system of the tribal communities in Odisha should be studied and documented thoroughly and an overall assessment of the situation made, as swidden can be a useful component of rural development in hilly terrains and environmental management. The need is emerging to blend traditional knowledge systems with latest technology to make the swidden system more vibrant



and productive. It requires development planning to follow consultative processes giving the communities wider choice to maintain traditional practices, sustain indigenous germ plasm, traditional food habit, cultural identity and traditional technology through shifting cultivation. Shifting cultivation or swiddening should not be seen as a completely destructive practice rather as a suitable land use practice in mountainous regions of the state and as a way of life for the tribal communities who have been depending on it since generations.

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# Myth and Migration: A Revisit to Historiography of Kuidina<sup>1</sup>

\* Anuja Mohan Pradhan

## ABSTRACT

*Mobility is a dynamic factor of civilization whereas literature of an era is a still reflection in the array of time. Myths and migration are two factors in creating history of a culture. These factors, in context of Kuidina, call for a re-look much beyond the colonial perspective of meria, mohua and proselytization.*

The human race is always in search of better opportunities and amenities. Since the time of its origin the human race is proceeding on an endless journey in the course of which it has multiplied its identity into races, regions and nations. In this journey of civilization, the ages identical with their material position has been named as Palaeolithic, Bronze, Iron and Copper are nothing but phases of socio-cultural and economic evolution. The human conditions rather than the genetics have labelled a particular race as a tribe, civilized or modern community based on prevalent occupation, manners and beliefs.

India as an ancient nation has witnessed almost all the phases in the evolution of civilization and in its connotation beyond its current political boundary became more modern and civilized by the invading of Aryan people. This invasion played the role of a carom striker that pushed the non-Aryan people of Indus valley to move in different directions, mostly towards the south. The updated history which is yet to describe the state of pre-Indus valley India is a witness to the shattered journey of non-Aryans towards the south till they met the southern seas. Perhaps, the journey from Indus valley to Indian Ocean gave them the full meaning of "Jambudweep<sup>2</sup>". The land that has snowy mountains in the north and oceans in the south also called "Bharat". The migration from Indus to the Indian oceans could fix the boundaries of this land mass.

The pace of migration is dependent on the means of movement. In ancient times the migration took hundreds of years. Each stop became a settlement unless it was pushed forward by the successive migrants as they had exhausted resources or the place could not bear the burden of settlement. The migration caused by invasion by military expeditions was rapid and originally not intended for settling down in the conquered land permanently. The examples can be Greek and Mongol invasions and early Muslim invasions to India. However, the invasion by the Mughals proved to be a migration for their permanent

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<sup>1</sup>Kuidina is what the Kui speaking people call their land. It is a cultural identity much broader than political boundaries of Kandhmal.

<sup>2</sup>A wonder That was India, A L Bhasam



settlement in the conquered land. While creating the history of the migration, historiography considers referred geographical landmarks dotting the literature, both oral and written, developed in course of the journey. Another most cognitive factor is the linguistic links that complete the sketch of migration and possible date line. This historiography super imposed on the current socio-economic and demographic profile of the land gives an account of the migration of the people to this land.

The table-land above the Kalinga Ghats is named "Kandhamal" by the outsiders since British times and its natives call it "Kuidina"<sup>3</sup>. Among its inhabitants, the tribe Kandha are the numerically major. The other major groups include "Domanga"<sup>4</sup> or the people officially recorded as "Pano". These people inhabit the land since the ancient times. As a thumb rule of historiography the literary sources play a defined role besides the archaeological and tangible evidences. Kandhas as the early settlers, who identify themselves as KuiLoku or Kuienju (Kui People) claim to be the "lords of the land". Others communities such as Domanga, Kumbhar, Lohar etc. are officially branded as the migrants who came there from the surrounding plains about five hundred years ago. Some sources quote the Panos as the people who have migrated from plains and do not have a language of their own. They are stated to be not having a share in Kui culture.

The emergence of jargons like "sons of the soil", "mooladivasi", "indigenous people", "PTG" are hyped and used with different connotations. The research on the inhabitants is mostly based on the views of British administrators. The rites of human sacrifice and the aim of annihilation of local rulers of the native kingdoms was the main motive behind civilizing the wild tribes of the said Khond hills<sup>5</sup>. The writings on the people of Khond hills developed during last two centuries. In view of recent unrest in Kandhamal the need of the time has been to encourage the adoption of certain attitudes and theories about its past which are now becoming increasingly irrelevant. The time has come to free the researchers from the necessary polemics of the history writing of the colonial period. We should re-examine the age old myths that have been made the corner stone of administrative research. We should acquire the confidence of critically assessing our own culture and history. This paper is a modest attempt to relook into:

1. Myths of creation versus historical trends
2. Places of origin versus migration of people
3. Review of literary sources

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<sup>3</sup>Kuidina is the land of Kui culture which is much beyond the political boundary of current Kandhamal district.

<sup>4</sup>The Government records do not mention the nomenclature of Domanga. Domanga has been recorded as Panos. The Panos of other district has no cultural link with that of Domanga. Non recognition of domanga as caste has denied special status to this people of Kuidina.

<sup>5</sup>Khond Hills, Kandhamal and Kuidina are synonymous. Khondmal is more often used in Govt. records, Khond hill is a popular usage of missionaries and Kuidina is what the Kui speaking people call this land. Kui is very often used as a prefix viz. kuiloku, kuikussa, Kui Kumarenju etc.

## Myths of Creation versus Historical Trends

Among the tribal myths, regarding origin of Khonds the Sapaghana myth<sup>6</sup> and Nagala-Bondela myth are most popular. The myths are being reproduced in its English version, as recorded by Verrier Elwin and Mrs. Barbara M.Boal respectively.

### THE SAPHAGANNA MYTH

*In the beginning there was nothing but water. Nirantali- Kapantali emerged to the earth's surface at Saphaganna. After her, came the other gods and the first human, who were later referred to as the Kondhs. But how could humans live in all the water? They went to Nirantali and begged her for help. Eventually, the water sank down and rock emerged, but there still was no earth, until Nirantali produced it. Some say she got it from her hair, some say she was angry and spat and her spit turned into white ants which excreted the earth, and others say she sent the Kondhs to search for earth, and when they could not find it, in despair, they besought a mountain of rock and scratched it with their nails, like bears, until it took pity on them and they could excavate the earth. They took four handfuls of earth, -black, white, red and yellow- which Nirantali told them to throw in four directions. Now the earth was spread over the rock, but it still was not firm- when they stepped on it, their feet went through. So they setup a bamboo pole and sacrificed a cow, a buffalo and pig before it and the earth became hard and dry. The bones of these sacrificed victims became rocks and the hair became trees and grass. Nirantali created other creatures and plants from beeswax and the dirt of her body.*

### THE STORY OF NAGALA BONDELA<sup>7</sup>

*"There were two Dravidian men-Nagala and Bondela by name on the banks of the Sindhu River in Northern India. When the Aryan people came to India, these two men moved off to a different place, dwelt in caves because of their fear for them. Their food was simply jungle tubers. Nagala's and Bondel's sons were Prohti and Prohera. The exact names of Prohti's and Prohera's sons were Kulo and Dohu. Kulo said to Dohu: "(You) Domua!" therefore Dohu remained lying down, his descendents became "Domenga". Dohu called Kulo: "Tuber-digger!" (that is DondhaKhoulou on Oriya). And according to his means of subsistence, his descendants became "Konds"(Kandha in Odia).*

*Kulo's wife was "Sanjuli" and Dohu's wife was "Binjuli". From them 17 clans have descended and 17 Dom clans similarly. The Kond ones are: 1) Saora Konds; 2) Nepal Konds; 3) Naga Konds; 4) Mundari Konds; 5) Santal Konds; 6) Mikri Konds; 7) Kutia Konds; 8) Makar Konds; 9) Meriah Konds; 10) Jomidar Konds; 11) Sola Konds; 12) Benia Konds; 13) Siko Konds; 14) Bono Saora Konds; 15) The names of other three are difficult to trace from the history of their origin.*

<sup>6</sup>Myths of Orissa (1954, PP-549-50) Verrier Elwin

<sup>7</sup>Myths of Orissa (1954) Verrier Elwin



The Dom clans are: 1) The Goldsmith Doms; 2) The Flying Squirrel Doms (Diu); 3) The Naked Doms; 4) The Duhuria Doms (? Duguria-ádditional'); 5) The Kusola Doms; 6) The Seven Elder Sister Doms; 7) The Porpoti Doms; 8) The Horse-drawn Cart Doms; 9) Mogda Doms; 10) The Distiller Doms; 11) The Pan-making Doms; 12) The Tiger/ Leopard Doms; 16) The Gundia Doms (?Button-maker Doms); 17) The Potter Doms.

Besides the above two, one more myth collected by Verrier Elwin which deserves mention. The Khond myth No. 10 in chapter XIX<sup>7</sup>, there is hints on how siblings of same parents divided into different castes. The myth is as follows:-

There was once a Kond who lived with his sister. One day this Kond took one measure of bullets and another measure of gunpowder and sat under an irpi<sup>8</sup> tree. A barking-deer came to eat the irpi flowers and the Kond raised his gun to shoot it. The deer said, 'Don't kill me. I have something to tell you.' The man lowered his gun and listened. The deer said, "Hollow out the trunk of a bombax tree and get into it, for tomorrow the world will sink below the waters and all living creatures will die.' The Kond went home and took his sister and they hollowed out the tree and went in. They took seeds and animals and covered the opening with wax. Next day the world sank down and everything was covered under water. But the bombax tree floated on the surface, blown here and there by the wind.

After some time, seven Suns and seven Moons came from Honigarh and all the water dried up. When it had dried, the Moons thought, it is the fault of these seven Suns that all living creatures have been killed. And they plotted to destroy all but one of the Suns.

Then the Moon came to earth and brought the brother and sister out of the bombax tree and they lived as man and wife. They had seven sons and seven daughters and they married each other. Then the parents sent Dakpaji and Sujamajenja-the two elder brothers, who collected some irpi flowers. When Dakpaji picked up the irpi flowers, he found they were gold and silver. But when Sujamajenja picked them up, he found only irpi flowers. When they got home, the parents made Dakpaji a Raja and Sujamajenja a Kond and the other brothers, Paiks and Doms. They then lived separately and divided into different castes.

Myths have been a major genre of any folklore. Almost all the tribes or the clans within the same tribes claim to have a special myth of their creation. The totems adored by the clans or tribes are mostly attributed to the myth. For example, Guna Kui clan believe that they were originated from the egg of Guna bird. This is a sparrow sized bird in the wild which is green in colour and has two long feathers in its tale which distinguishes it from others. The much deliberated Sapaghana myth describes how the Khonds, the first man on the earth was born. Not only Khonds, other tribes like Gadabas also claimed that the first man created by God was a Gadaba. The Nagala-Bondala myth starts with the backdrop of Sindhu i.e. Indus valley civilization and culminates with seventeen Khond clans

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<sup>7</sup>Myths of Orissa (1954) Verrier Elwin

<sup>8</sup>Mohua tree (*Madhucalndica*)

and seventeen Domanga clans who are resident of Kuidina. Such clans, in the words of Boal, "This story appears to be an attempt both to classify the many groups and peoples whom they have met or of whom they have heard in the course of their journeys and perhaps of their education, and also to align this information about their knowledge of the wide social difference between Khonds and Pans as they experience it in everyday life in the hills. Their close interaction with the Khonds could make some kind of definition which is basically much more necessary to them than would their relationship with the other groups of settlers, whose roles are quite clearly defined."<sup>9</sup>

Which journey Boal underlines in her analysis? Does it begin from Sapaghana or Indus valley? The Nagala-Bondala myths also have some sequel. Late Dayanidhi Malik of village Betikola, who was a learned man (School Teacher and Odisha Sahitya Academy Award winner), has been accredited with design of alphabet for the Kui language of the Khonds. On personal discussion with this author Late Malik once told that Nagala migrated to Nagaland and Prohti to Punjab.

Myths are myths. Crediting someone's origin purely to myth makes the origin more mysterious. Verrier Elwin, the pioneer of tribal myths in Orissa and Central India mentions the shortcomings. "The Kond stories, in fact are in a great muddle and it is impossible to derive any logical or coherent account from them. They reflected the cultural confusion into which this large and scattered tribe has fallen; a very similar situation exists among the Gonds.<sup>10</sup> " In contrast to mythical explanation to origin of tribes especially of Dravidian origin it is quite pertinent that the people must have travelled to this land at a time beyond the retrievable memory. Zeroing on the Khond people of Kuidina, the geographical landmass which was beyond the knowledge of outer world till the British invasion and the Ghumsur war of 1835-1837. If the land was so untouched, what is the possible answer to the Buddhist remains of Dungi? There was no mention of human sacrifice. Captain Mac Pherson describing the role of native rulers says that the Khonds paid tribute to the Bhanja kings who in return sent two Paiks with Guns to the festivity of human sacrifice to shoot rounds as an approval from the nobility. Keeping aside the shortcomings of considering myths as historical dateless diaries, it is undoubtedly verified that Khonds and the Domanga existed since the mythical ages as two sides of the same coin supplementing each other socially, culturally and economically.

### **Mobility of Khonds and migration of other people**

Khond hills have unique geographical features of a table land. These hills form the part of Eastern Ghats. From all the fronts one has to ascend to reach the land. It has elevation of 2000-2400 feet MSL. Kalinga Ghat, Korada Ghat, Madhopur Ghat, Ranipathar Ghat, Bonda Pipili and Brahmini Gaon Ghat are the entry points to this land. Since, time

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<sup>9</sup>*The Khonds- Human Sacrifice and Religious Change*, Barbara M. Boal (1954) pp-4

<sup>10</sup> (*Tribal Myths of Orissa*, Verrier Elwin Page-44)



immemorial, people used these routes for coming to this land. The Kalingaghat in the eastern side had Andharkot Garh as a hide out of the Bhanja Kings. Through Andharkotgarh a route was connecting Doda hill via Kurmingia. Following the last Bhanja King in refuge, the British forces passed Kalinga ghat and the historical battle was fought in the outskirts of Kurminiga village. The people led by Bhangu Malika fought with British forces. This event is still referred as "Pathan Kala" in the locality. The point is, the British forces did not make the route rather they used it for the first time. Another approach to this land was through village Dakpala. Dakpala is a village about 12 kms from G. Udaygiri. In British times there was a rest house or Bungalow in the midst of Mango trees planted in a semi-circle. People from Koroda had to carry the British officers in Palanquins up to Dakpala and people of Dakpala had to carry their lap to village Lingargarh. In 1860's the Spanish missionaries used the Brahminigaon route to reach Kadhmals. In the western front near Belghar is a small hamlet named Sapaganda which is believed to be the place of origin of the Khonds. If the myth is to be believed, *ceteris paribus* there would have been a west to east migration of Khonds with increase in their number. The Gonds- the largest tribe of India are credited to their origin in Gondwana Land of Madhya Pradesh. In the Gond dominated villages such as Chanchedi, Malerimaha, G. Udaygiri, Bondhogarh etc there is worship of Barala Devi done in a distinct language that establishes a migration link from Bastar to Khond hills through western passage of Belghar and Bonda Pipili.

In the western foothills of Doda mountain there are two villages, Rambha and Baibali. In the Ganjam district Rambha is a small township on the shores of Chilikalake. Baibali is a village near Indragarh in Soroda block. It is said that the people of Kandhmal's Baibali has ancestral links in Ganjam district, from where they had borrowed these names. Another case is about the village Kadespata in the Daringbadi block of Kandhmal district. This author had a chance to chat with Shrijaninga Pradhan<sup>11</sup>, an elderly person of the village. During the brief discussion his response was worth mentioning.

Author: *How your village is named Kadespata?*

J P: There was no settlement in this place and it was filled with the forest. A buffalo was missing and the owner was in search of the buffalo. The buffalo had a long log tied to its neck<sup>12</sup>. Tracking the dragging marks the owner spotted his buffalo in a pool of mud near a water source in the dry summer. Finding a new source of water he, along with his relations shifted to this place and named the new settlement as *Kadespata* derived from *kades*-the mud.

Author: *Did your father or grandfather come to this place?*

J P: It was before that. We are the off-springs of original inhabitants from Ganja and Huma.

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<sup>11</sup>An elderly man is in his eighties. He is well known for his Kui songs especially the ploughing songs and memoirs of the past.

<sup>12</sup> In Kui it is called Kaadaa. The village has in the eastern side miles long flat rocks, thickly covered by moss and other vegetation. In Kui the flat rocks are called Paataor say Paataanga in plural.

Author: *These names are similar to places Ganja and Huma in Ganjam district!*

J P: Our ancestors came from those places but I can not tell you their names. I remember my father saying that the person who migrated from there had two grandsons and they were named after their place of origin, Ganja and Huma.

During or prior to British period the people had to face invasions from other groups which Campbell described as "tribal feuds". A fertile cultivable piece of land was a prized possession and was often targeted. There were bloodsheds for occupying the land. This author had a discussion with Shri Kole Pradhan and Shri Bansidhar Pradhan of village Kalinga in G. Udayagiri Block and here are few excerpts.

Author: *How came this name Kalinga to this village? Was it after the name of Kalinga kingdom?*

Kole Pradhan: It is like this. Our forefathers were at Golagando<sup>13</sup>. When our forefathers came to this place, Kali Malika was the owner of the whole land. He had already lost his father and was the only son living with his mother. At that time only source of water was near Mundamalanga (i.e. a place about two Kms from the present Kalinga square). The new entrants had a plan to kill Kali Malika for which he always carried his axe. What they did, they prepared a *kendu* stick and by burning in rings<sup>14</sup>. The stick was kept on the path to the source of water. Kali Malika got panic confusing the stick with a snake and fell down on the way. The conspirators slit his throat and reported to his mother that on the sight of a snake your son fell down on the path and his throat was cut accidentally by his own axe. The lamenting mother left the place at once and went down the Kalinga *ghat*<sup>15</sup>. Thus the village Kalingia<sup>16</sup> has the history how the later migrants eliminated the previous occupants of the land and named it after its owner Kali.

Shri Bansidhar Pradhan narrated about the brutality of tribal feuds. On capture of boys during invasion, the opposite groups even used to chop their genitals so that they cannot procreate. The mothers used to dress the boys as girls while taking them to outside villages. He said that their ancestors were driven out from place to place before settling in Kalinga.

### **Literary Evidences of Migration**

Ellen Churchill Semple in her famous work *Influences of Geographic Environment*<sup>17</sup> emphasises that migration 'underlies most written history and constitutes the major part of on the written history, especially that of savage and nomadic tribes.' The

<sup>13</sup> It is a place in the forest near Kalinga which is not habited now.

<sup>14</sup> The Kendu has a thick bark. When a Kendu stick is peeled in rings and exposed to fire, the open part becomes black and covered part remains white. That will resemble the strips of a craft. The village milkmen used to decorate their sticks by baking in with strips.

<sup>15</sup> Till date there is a spot in forest near Kalinga named as "Budalinipoteka" meaning beads of the old lady. At the spot there are some wild vines intertwined and people believe that these are the beads of Kali Malika's mother thrown while lamenting for her slain son.

<sup>16</sup> Some of the British records mention the Kalingia - Balliguda road (SH - 7A) as Kali Pano Road.

<sup>17</sup> *Influences of Geographic Environment*, pp - 75



geographical references in literature are that the migrating people were aware of the place for they were there at any point of time. The description of seven rivers in the Vedas, reference of snowy mountains of north, contemporary names of the cities in travelogues of travellers like Huen Tshang, Fahien, Ibn Batuta are but few examples well accepted in world history.

Kui language has its own oral literature in its own right and concept. The oral literature developed sometimes as a tool to merriment such as songs for dance, relaxation to toils of work such as the planting songs by women folk or ploughing songs by men. The songs, describe many events as memoirs. The major chunk of songs depicts the purest of human emotion that is love. Among all forms of Kui oral literature the genre that has the least alteration are the hymns of worship. The hymns are handed down from one man to another as a disciple, very often from father to son. The village priests happen to be the custodians of these hymns. Kui hymns basically comprised of:

- 1) Glories of god for their creation (*putipilpa, bihenikohenipahpa*)
- 2) Soliciting the presence or addressing the gods with the place of their residence (*Dondo Dobbo*)
- 3) Invoking the ancestors by name or in a group (*pideri pita*)
- 4) Prayers for well-being, good crops, health of people and cattle, blessings to a new born and wedding couple etc.

While invoking the Gods by the name of their places, a priest gives a clear view of local geography that one can think of. It consists of different hills, streams, sacred groves and forests. The extensive coverage of such places by a priest gives him a higher rank. This author, while recording ritual hymn in the village Kondbadi came to know the names like Jhilimili, Godaraka, Birikot etc. On enquiry, the priest could not locate the location of Jhilimili and Godaraka. The point is how an illiterate and ignorant man who never travelled that far could invoke the places as seats of Gods without a proper name? Kondbadi till date does not have a road to be accessible by a motor bike. People have to walk about 15 Kilometres to get their PDS rice. The priest himself has never travelled that far. He had inherited the hymns by learning through listening to his father in line of the *Smritis*. In the time beyond the retrievable memory, the places have been the places worshiped by these people, the Khonds. The people moving from one settlement to other have revered those places and carry the sacred legacy till date. Had it been a case of adoption, these hymns must have incorporated God's like Jagannath, Vishnu, Ganesh and other Hindu deities.

Linguistically Kui is a language of the Dravidian group that have close affinity to Telegu than Odia which come under the Indo-Aryan family of languages. The following comparison of few words of Kui with Telegu and Odia languages has been made in the following statement.

Kui	Telegu	Oriya	Meaning in English
Aaba	Abba/nana	Bapa	Father
Aaja	Amma	Maa	Mother
Siru	Nilu	Pani	Water
Idu	Illu	Ghar	House
Aate	Aipendi	Hela	Done
Naai	Naa/Naadi	Moro	My

What is the cause of this affinity? What it means to be a group of language? The simple answer is, perhaps the same ancestral links. The linguistic affinity of the Vedas and Zinda Vesta could establish the link of Indian Aryans and European Aryans separated through migration. The links of Indian Banjaras is established through study of language of Czech Republic and other nomadic (Hippy) tribes of Europe. The same has happened in the case of Kui. The Kui speaking people formed the part of Dravidians, migrating from North-West to South through ages. There never has been in any record of migration from south to north except through war. Hence, to conclude, there is no need for reiteration that Kui speaking people were part of the contingent of Dravidians from the North than ascribing the origin fixed to a place and mythical claim of first man on the earth.

### Conclusion:

Every nation, upon examination, turns out to have been a more or less successful melting pot. In the Indian context, tribes and professional groups when converted into Jatis were given a Varna status, a *jati* rank and if necessary assigned a *gotra*<sup>18</sup>. This constant shifting of races and peoples has given the mosaic of cultural assimilation to Kuidina. As in history, people speaking language of Sanskrit base has followed the Dravidians like the Khond sand settled as traders, Government officials and administrators in the habitat of the latter. But they have never adopted the language, customs and panel of gods and goddesses of Kui speaking people. On the other hand the lateral migrants have become catalysts of *sanskritisation* or Hinduization as the case may be. The cultural or civilized state of interaction over period of time has influenced the Kui speaking people, who have social, economic and political dominance in Kuidina. Events like Viswakarma Puja, Satsang of Anukulchandra, Laxmi Puja, performance of *yajna* and immersion of mortal remains (*asthi*) in sea at Puri or in the Ganges, ten days of mortuary pollution on death and annual *sradha* rites etc. can be attributed to these factors. It is seen that the successful invaders have been more effective to drive out the indigenous people. Even in some places, they have reduced the original inhabitants to minority. As His Holiness Dalai Lama sarcastically remarks "Tibetans has become tourist attractions" in the Chinese occupied Tibet<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>18</sup>The past and prejudice (1972), Romila Thapar, pp 39

<sup>19</sup>Freedom in Exile- An autobiography of Dalai Lama.



Most of the sociological and anthropological researches on Kui speaking people have been that of Meria, Mohua and proselytization. There has been a lot said about the savagery of human sacrifice of the Khonds. But their distinguishing socio-cultural traits like mass mourning (*maada*), the liberty given to women to say "no" to a prospective groom in open meeting if she does not like him, mutual participation of people in hunting, festivity and settling social and customary issues has never been given due importance. The recent policy of segregation in the context of security is ridiculous. The present day research shall look into the socio-cultural history of the people of Kuidina, rising above the colonial view point. The objective of research shall be discovery of truth for a peaceful and harmonious development of people of Kuidina and their integration with the national mainstream in a footing of equality while retaining their cultural identity.

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# Creativity among Tribes of Odisha - An Overview

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## ABSTRACT

The conventional arts, crafts and literatures of the tribal communities of Odisha offer a rich visual vocabulary on their social and cultural life. Their dress, ornaments and lovely wall paintings (Chita and Jhoti) reflect the creative and artistic view of their life. In this article prepared upon analysis of relevant primary and secondary data, a sincere attempt has been made to highlight the creative faculty of the tribes of Odisha in the field of art, craft, dance, music, painting and literature. An arbitrary list of the magico-religious objects including deities and shrine crafts of our tribes has also been presented in this article. There are a number of problems which hinder the way of the spontaneous overflow of their creative urges, have been chalked out rather vehemently. Many passionate and viable suggestions have also been given for the better future of the tribal communities as a whole. An effort has also been made to find out the missing links and factors influencing creativity of the tribal communities as well.

**Key words:** Creativity, Riddles, Indigenous Knowledge (IK), Magico-religious objects, Shrine Crafts

## Introduction

The excellence of being able to produce original work or ideas in any field may be denoted as creativity. It includes the act of creating or producing something new using one's own skill and imagination. It otherwise refers to the production of that which is original, innovative or imaginative by nature. Above all, creativity depends on independent and divergent thinking of the artist while performing any form of art. It can be traced in music, art, sculpture, dance, painting or literature. In the contemporary world of art Tribal people have made their own place. Aborigines of Africa, Australia and New Zealand etc have contributed their richest tradition to the treasures of art. Some of the modern trends of art are the outcomes of the primitive inspirations. Indian tribal people also have definite artistic manifestations. The aesthetic sense is inherent in most people so also with the tribal groups.

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## Importance of Creativity

A creative thinker whether an artist, a writer, a painter, a singer, a dancer or a scientist always tries to create or discover 'something new under the sun'. According to Mednik, "Creative thinking consists of forming new combinations of associative elements". The importance of creativity can never be ignored as it paves the way towards the world of new awareness and inventions that can improve the quality of human life. A visual artist articulates his thoughts with a view to have an impact on viewers; a creative writer tries to do the same for his readers. Creative scientists indulge in their own discoveries and those of others, inventing new ways and means of studying nature and the natural world around. So it has rightly been marked by Gulliford as "Creativity sometimes refers to creative potential, sometimes to creative production and sometimes to creative productivity".

## Characteristics of creativity

The characteristics of creativity may be grouped as follows. One creative artist may have one, two, three or many characteristics simultaneously as follows.

- i) independent and critical thinking, ii) imagination and intrinsic motivation, iii) concentration and divergent thinking, iv) intelligence, insight and illumination, v) effortless fluency and flexibility, vi) tolerance of ambiguity, originality, vii) breadth of interest, viii) sensitivity and curiosity, ix) analysis and intuition, x) focus and perseverance, xi) reasoning by metaphor and analogy, xii) synthesis and combination, xiii) abstraction and simplification etc.

## Creativity among Tribes of Odisha:

Odisha has the unique feature of having 62 tribes. Each tribe of Odisha is well known for its distinctiveness in the ways of life. Tribal people of Odisha are naturally endowed with the gift of creativity. Tribal art and crafts are essentially the products of their indigenous and inherent artistic skills embodying the creative imagination of the tribal craftsmen. Art is most simply and most usually defined as an attempt to create pleasing forms. Such forms satisfy our sense of beauty and the sense of beauty is satisfied when we are able to appreciate a unity or harmony of formal relations among our sense perceptions. The craft examples produced by them have their age-old ways of production, their own designs, colour schemes and individual shapes. The tools used by the craftsmen, though rude and simple in many cases can produce unique examples of artifacts impregnated with silent and subtle beauty. The tribal crafts have also their own primitive characteristics in respect of patterns, colour schemes, shapes and techniques which should be exclusively styled as tribal. Tribal literature also registers creative impulse in its own original way.

## Creativity in Tribal Literature

The tribal groups have retained their knowledge in their songs, dances, music, folk tales, riddles, proverbs etc. and disseminate them to next generations orally through

dormitory education, ceremonial hunting, and forest product collection expeditions. The folklores of the tribal people offer the healing touch of tune and music. These tribal groups sing the victory of realism since the time immemorial. We find their joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, tear and smile in the stanzas of their songs. They generally use the simple objects and elements of nature as their simile and metaphor in songs. They also use variety of symbols and images to express their inner selves. The name of their rivers and mountains, Gods and Goddesses come artlessly in to their lines of songs. Societal thoughts along with customary accent put in their songs a rare quality of beauty and attraction. Their songs also represent moral values and disciplines in an authoritarian voice. They convey the message of unity and integration.

Their songs can be divided into 6 categories,

- Agriculture based
- Ritual based
- Hunting based
- Love, Marriage and other Social Events based
- Festival based
- Entertainment based

#### **Kandha songs (for examples)**

*(1) Ikinader male nadir /delare male delare  
DaenSapangadata/daensarchasngadata  
Daesika rani paluta/daesikabendipaluta  
Bedasiladaeti/Lanjusiladaeti  
Ujadisiladaeti/pajadisiladaeti  
Lingaaabandigaisi  
Jananiaabandigaisi*

#### **Meaning**

*(1) Two girls named Rani and Bendi  
Took birth from two holes-Sapangada and Sargagada.  
There was no sun ray nor moon beam  
No light at all  
While wandering inside the darkness  
They developed a desire to walk on earth.  
Just like a bird's brood coming out of the egg cover,  
The male power and female power on earth  
came into being from the hole.*

*(2) Jeibidibadanimale /Jemumehenatanginimale  
Indrabatinanjahare/ Urkinatasanakamare.*



Ajubinatakinimale/ajukalatakinimale  
Indrabatinanjahare / Urkinatasanakamare.  
Belatakibalanimale/ dinatakidinatamale  
Indrabatinanjahare / Urkinatasanakamare.  
Majasajatakinimale/nayedakataninimal  
Indrabatinanjahare/ Urkinatasanakamare.  
Aadenaunkiatemal/munduduruniatemal  
Indrabatinanjahare/ Urkinatasanakamare.

### Meaning

(2) Look friend, look dear....  
The river Indravati is waving...  
Play and spend the day dear  
This time will not be there tomorrow...  
Time is passing  
Today differs from Yesterday.  
Like wave let's dance and merge  
With one another  
For pleasure,  
For a true life.  
Let sorrows and sufferings come on our way  
Like the Indravati waves,  
Let's dance and sing  
And Drink  
The drops of sweat.

### Riddles

Riddle is very important for the study of life and culture of a community. Like myth, legend and folktale, riddle is an important component of folklore. The composition of a riddle needs creativity to a certain degree and depth. It is made up of two parts. One part is question and the other part is answer pertinent to the question. Usually in the question part a fact is concealed by means of either metaphor or a simile whereas the answer part of the riddle reveals the secret. Because of this concealment riddle attains its unique beauty and significance. Riddle stimulates the inquisitiveness and intellectual curiosity in man. The cultural background of riddle is very vast and varied. Their use of riddles reveals a lot depth involved in their meanings.

The riddles of the tribal people as a whole can be classified as under.

- Related to natural phenomena
- Related to animal world

- Related to food and vegetable world
- Related to human body
- Related to jokes
- Related to domestic life

### **Saora Riddles (for Examples)**

*Rajanaalantadabutijagalraptie ?Pai*

(No one can drink water from the king's spring, what is it? Green coconut water)

*Bamanarairibendenetigaisoulagte?Ungulu*

Wherever a man goes another follows him, what is it? Shadow

*Rajanaakadipbutinabliangleruptite?Kintea*

(Who can tell the name of the King's sword? Banana Leaf)

*Lungarlingan tar piden tare site?Jah*

The white mushroom of the rainy season is dazzling within the cave, what is it? Teeth)

*YagiAbbangaljiijingan?Ara*

It has three heads and ten legs, what is it? A farmer with his plough

### **Creativity in Tribal Dance and Music**

Dance is the overt expression of emotional energy by means of systematized muscular movement. There is certain emotional experience which transcends the normal modes of expression. The purpose of dance is to give symbolical expression to these experiences. Dance may be performed for the sake of its effect upon the dancer himself or for the sake of its effect upon the onlookers. In all primitive dances music of some sort is an inseparable feature. It is employed by the dancers themselves to add extra rhythm to the dance forms. Frequently singing is added to intensify the expression of feeling or at times to tell a story.

Different types of dances among aboriginal tribes are -

- Dance on Labour activities
- Dance on hunting and warfare
- Magical dances
- Dance connected with Death
- Dance on Marriage
- Pastime Dances
- Religious Dances
- Courtship Dances
- Dance on other Social Events

These dances, a combination of simple steps and movements are exuberant, colourful and spontaneous. While in some dances men and women dance together, others



are performed exclusively by either the men or the women of the community. In some dances while men sing and play music, the women dance to the tune of music and in some other dances women dance and sing while men only play music.

Some of the well-known dances of different tribal groups of Odisha are Budigadi / Kalasi Dance and Danta Dance (Santal), Karama Dance (Oraon), Guarsingh Dance (Maria), Kathi Dance (Jatapu), Madili Dance (Gond), Bahabonga Dance (Mankirdia), Gotar Parab Dance (Lanjia Saora), Dhangdi Dance (Desia Kondh) and Rinjidi Dance (Paroja), Demsa Dance (Gadaba and Paroja), Changu Dance (Juang and Pauri Bhuyan)

### **Tribal Indigenous Knowledge and Creativity**

Tribal society represents a unique and sustainable eco, agriculture and health cultures and related indigenous knowledge, worldview and values which are the basis for evolution of their animistic religion, social organizations and sustainable subsistence of forests and agro-based economy and survival. These elements are in tune with the laws of nature and reflect the wisdom of tribal living in harmony with nature.

### **Specific Tribal Indigenous Knowledge**

- The tribal life style is mostly based on their indigenous knowledge which is intimately connected with nature and its related worldview beliefs. They believe that their life is controlled and guided by various natural and super natural beings that exist around them and all the natural resources are the gifts of these divine forces. They also relate different divine spirits to different natural resources. Accordingly they have evolved their eco cultures.
- They maintain their cultural identity and values through their social organizations such as traditional institutions and dormitories, magico-religious practices, languages, customs, traditional norms, values, rituals, folk songs, music and dance etc.
- Their well-knit socio-cultural systems, strong kinship bonds, totemic concepts, dormitory education and well organized participatory democratic traditional village institutions are all the supporting mechanisms for the stability, equity and sustainability of their life style.
- Their indigenous knowledge and skills in management of natural resources and bio cultural diversity is evident from their shifting cultivation. Knowing the importance of maintaining symbiotic relationship between man and nature the tribal societies have long back evolved several controlling and regulatory mechanisms.
- The traditional tribal institutions have an elaborate arrangement to protect and conserve the natural resources by establishing the concept of totemism in the

communities and social taboos and negative social sanctions to deal with the violation of these norms.

- The community spirit among the tribals is based on the concepts of harmonious living with nature and natural resources, communal ownership, communal ceremonies, community centered life style and the community based harvesting of the resources.
- There are environment friendly festivals of the tribes like *Chait Parab, Karma, Sarhul* etc.
- On the basis of the topography, agro- ecology and their racial and cultural backgrounds, tribals have adopted diverse agricultural practices with their time tested indigenous knowledge and technologies and have integrated several related practices like Shifting Cultivation, Terrace Cultivation and Plain land Agriculture.
- They possess indigenous knowledge on health and nutrition and herbal medicines for human and cattle health. Their nutritional practices are based on their natural resources like wild leafy vegetables, edible tubers, nuts, berries, fruits, flowers, meat etc. Their food culture and food preparations contain sufficient calories, lower in saturated fats, more iron and zinc, vitamin E, Calcium and other micro nutrients.

### **Creativity in Tribal Art and Craft**

Art can be seen in almost all aspects of human activity. But art objects mean articles made with designs. But craft is a device applied by a person to convert certain materials into finished products. The tribal art and craft objects mainly include functional, ornamental and magico-religious objects of their everyday use.

### **Functional Objects**

Functional objects may include small things of everyday use like textile items, baskets, pots and vessels for keeping domestic articles, oil containers, water pots, musical instruments, measuring bowls, tobacco cases, foot wears, hunting arrows, war weapons, clay lamps, comb, wine pipe, tobacco container, smoking pipe, lighter, ritual knife, catapult, bird trap, fishing trap etc.

### **Textile Items**

Among the above cited functional objects, textiles deserve special mention with full of creative impulse. The textile items of the tribal people include cotton cloth, coat, shawl, skirt, saree, *chadar*, loin cloth, blouse, jacket, bag, cap etc. We can trace different artistry on textiles of different tribal groups like the Dongria Kandha and the Bonda of our state. The Kandha women wear only a short strip of cloth called *nadi* or *ringa*. The Bonda women weave their loin clothes from *kerang* fibre that has been coloured with vegetable dyes. The attire of the Dongria Kandha also looks very colourful and striking. The Dongria Kandha men wear a type of loin cloth with its ends hanging both in the front and the back side of the person. The women use two pieces of clothes as skirt and blouse to cover their



body. The Gadabas are well known for their simple and exclusive type of weaved clothes. Though Gadaba looms are not very advanced, their weaving skills are sophisticated. Gadaba women collect strong yarn from the howl of forest trees. They boil this yarn in water and dry it in bamboo bags. The yarn is then utilized to weave clothes to make garments. Apart from weaving garments, the Gadabas also make mats, curtains, fishing nets and brooms from raw materials collected from the forest.

### **Pottery, Basketry and Musical Instruments**

The water pots and the vessels for cooking and keeping domestic articles are widely used with unique decoration among the tribal groups of Odisha. Their artful musical instruments mainly consist of wood, brass, and iron. They also use various types of agricultural implements and weapons of offence and defense having different shape, size and artistic touch.

### **Decorative Objects**

The decorative objects include ornaments such as bangles, bracelets, armlets, necklaces, fingerings, earrings, amulets, forehead ornaments, hairpins, neckbands etc. Among other items special mention may be made of wall decorations, door carving and paintings which still play a significant role in the socio-cultural life of the tribal communities.

### **Ornamental Carving**

The decorative objects used by the tribal people mainly consist of ornaments made of silver, wood, brass, glass, lac, bamboo grass and palm leaf. The Bonda women are distinctive with their shaven heads, and bead necklaces covering their torso. The Bonda women wear a variety of ornaments such as aluminum neck rings, ear rings, nose rings, finger and toe rings, bangles of glass and aluminum, metallic anklets and head bands made of grass or beads that cover their shaven heads. The Santal women love to adorn themselves with ornaments. Traditionally they include silver bangles, necklace, golden ear rings, nose stud, silver armlets and ankle-rings.

Many ornaments of Dongria Kandha are made out of naturally available materials. Both the Dongria Kandha men and women are fond of ornaments and sport long hair tied at the back of the head. A small comb and knife, hair pins and clips are used to decorate the hair. Ornaments common to men and women include earrings, nose rings and thick metal and bead necklaces. Rings adorn the hands and feet. Women also wear metal and glass bangles, armlets and other ornaments. The Gadaba women are fond of ornaments and decorate their hair with colourful pins and beads. They use elaborate nose pins, necklaces, finger rings and bangles. Normally these ornaments are made of aluminum and brass. The dress and ornaments of the Gadaba women contribute to their distinct identity.

## Wood carving and door carving

The Gadabas build beautiful houses. Their villages comprise of rows of houses arranged along broad pathways. The Gadabas do not adhere to any particular shape of house and build **circular, square or rectangular** dwellings. The inside and outside areas of the Gadaba houses are found to be decorated with yellow, white, pink and brown coloured earth. Black from charcoal is used to draw lines and forms, including the form of the window on the walls. The centre pole is also decorated.

- Door and Window Carving
- Simple but beautiful carving on the wooden objects like Cow Bell (*tadka*) and *tundi*,
- Boat (*danga*), Plough (*langala*) and Yoke (*juali*), Shoe (*kathau*), Bow and arrow, Children's Toys etc.
- Small but meaningful Carving on Bamboo made objects like *jhampa*, *chhata*, flute, mat etc.
- The door carving is very simple but decorated with geometric lines. Various types of animals and birds are noticed on the door like peacock, cock, fish, lizard, tiger, deer, and cow with calf.

## Wall Decoration and Wall Paintings

Wall paintings are not only the expression of the wild creative surge that break the bank of life's monotony in a flood of fantasy but also form an integral part of the cultural life of the tribal communities. The simplest art in any tribal society is that of wall painting. The custom of making designs on walls and floors for some festivals is widespread in India. On certain ceremonial occasions and festivals the tribal people decorate their bodies with coloured strips and other designs. Wall drawings in geometric patterns on the outer wall of a hut are found in many tribal villages of Odisha.

The paintings and sculptures of tribal people are of exceedingly high quality and are documents of their cultural heritage. They reveal in symbols and motifs the most elaborate efforts of man's creativity. They record various trends and traditions of their society in their own language. Since art is the auto biography of culture, we locate in it the dreams and aspirations, taboos and witchcrafts, success and failures of the people. The symbols and motifs in art portray the imaginations of man and these imaginations are the representative emotions of the people of a particular period and society.

To decorate the walls with rice paste is a particular art of the Dongria Kandhas which goes to prove their love for beautification of their habitat. Their art can be broadly categorized in to two types.

- Symbolic art
- Representative art

The symbolic art like stone sculptures are not made by artists. They are natural in shape and texture. Their existence is based on superstitions and beliefs. Their selection is not based on any particular guidelines. There is no logic behind it. They worship such stones



with great awe and reverence. But mostly the representative arts and paintings are spontaneously made and are generally based on memory. Apart from animal forms, tribal people also imitate nature and natural objects. The depiction of nature, though not based on the spot study, is done through their memory. They draw the nature in a representational way.

### **Saora Paintings**

The Saora icons called *Idital* are made with a religious purpose other than for display whilst the wall paintings of others are more or less decorative in nature. Each *idital* contains different symbols and scenes depending upon the purpose for which it is meant and thus the pictograms may be divided into several categories according to their meaning and purpose. Although of great aesthetic charm, they convey a message rather insipidly. So their meaning is hardly evident without the interpretation of a Saora priest or Picture man.

### **Magico-Religious Objects**

The magico-religious objects mainly represent figures of deities which are worshipped by the tribal groups in their own way. Magico-religious beliefs and practices play an important role in the life of the tribal people. The tribal people believe in the symbolic representation of super natural elements and magical powers and produce such artifacts which have magico-religious significance. Besides the figures of gods and goddesses made of metals like brass or bell metal. Magico-religious objects are also made in different forms such as the memorial pillars, the funerary images, the anthropomorphic masks and human figures which are considered as the typical examples of tribal art ever seen.

- Establishment of gods and goddesses, symbols and motifs
- Meria Posts (*Kadrumunda*)
- Forms of human beings, animals, birds, forms of nature
- Stone sculptures
- Clay Crafts
- Dokra Crafts
- Paddy Crafts

Even we can find the touch of creativity in the following things under discussion.

### **Creativity in the Art of Tattooing**

Tattoo is the main traditional decorative art among the tribes. Apart from ancient Egyptians, the Red Indians, Eskimos, Japanese also practiced it largely. Tattooing is common with most of the tribal groups. For tattoo marks tattooists generally take the help of simple geometrical forms such as line, triangles, square, circle, dots etc. It is related more with drawing than painting. The Kandha pattern of drawing is comparatively smaller in size and covers a lesser part of the body. These patterns consists of small crude patterns of half moon, stars, cross, squares, flowers, animals, gods and goddesses. Simple dots on various

places of face are also found. Tattoo is generally common as an elaborate stripe at arm, on hand, below wrist, on hand between wrists to elbow an encircled thick pattern at ankle. All Kandha women of Odisha love to tattoo their faces. The most complex type of tattoo is from the forehead to the chin or both the sides of the face. The tattoo marks on the legs are small roses or circles made with a number of dots.

### **Factors influencing Tribal Creativity**

Art is the product of a deep rooted human urge which gives expression to emotional drives through painting, sculpture, dance, music and literature. But there are a number of factors which directly or indirectly affect creativity of the tribal groups in their society. It basically depends on their faith and beliefs, conventions and taboos, heredity and environment, their social system and structure etc. We can group those elements as

- God and Religion
- The spirit world
- Magic and witch craft
- Conventions and taboos
- Material economic status of the community
- Environment
- Philosophical Concepts
- Degree of isolation from adjoining culture

### **Missing Links and Need of the Hour**

- There is an obvious need for reorientation of tribal craft tradition, introduction of new designs and extension of good credit facility.
- Cheaper and simpler tools should be developed with good infrastructure and marketing facility.
- Utility objects are normally used by the common people while the decorative objects, by the well-to-do. The decorative objects should reach the hands of the well-to-do families backed by proper exposure and publicity.
- Focus should be on the understanding of the tribal practices and initiating actions to facilitate judicious integration of indigenous knowledge (IK) with the modern technology to achieve a comprehensive, sociologically acceptable, economically viable and environmentally sound sustainable development.

### **Conclusion**

Folk and tribal art, passed from one generation to the next, is the creative expression of people who live in harmony with nature. Traditionally, these art forms were used to mark different occasions such as celebrations, pacifying malevolent deities or forces of nature, thanks giving, harvests and birth of a child, puberty, marriage and cultural festivals. They have become important sources of knowledge about local mythology,



deities, heroes, epics, folktales, customs and traditions. For the artists of ancient time, mother earth was an available surface to draw on with the help of twigs or bone points. The paintings were created with bare hands, using fingers, thumbs, fists or palms or with the help of twigs, bones or other brushes created with available indigenous material and sharp cutting instruments were used to incise the images. Over period of time, the visual vocabulary of folk and tribal painting expanded beyond traditional contexts and now has almost evolved in to a new genre of ethnic art. Painting is an exquisite expression of human thought and nature that is an eternal source of inspiration.

Symbolism in folklore is a recognizable and usable property of a cultural group. A symbol depicts the identity. A meaning is established with the identity and the purpose of communication is served. Symbolism in art acts as a standardized or stylized expression of various concepts. The meaning expressed through symbols may range from small matter of fact, everyday details to concepts of cosmic importance such as the gods and the spirit world. One may note in general the prominence of symbolism connected with fertility, creation and natural phenomena in tribal and folk culture. The super-natural powers are also depicted with the symbol which is a way of appeasing these powers. Therefore depictions of art forms in the folk and tribal traditions have continued to be an important means of learning about and understanding traditional myths. The paintings may be sacred or secular in character. Animal and floral motifs, human figures and geometric designs are common in both sacred and secular wall paintings of the tribal people. But the symbolic communication, magico-religious importance and socio-economic significance of the two types of paintings may be entirely different or may have a marginal correlation with each other.

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