Scholarly Research Journal for Humanity Science & English Language Online ISSN 2348-3083, SJ IMPACT FACTOR 2024: 8.058

https://www.srjis.com/issues_data/233

PEER REVIEWED, REFEREED & INDEXED JOURNAL APR-MAY 2024, Vol-12/63



TRIBAL ECONOMY VIS-A-VIS URBANISATION- A STUDY ON MUNDA AND ORAM TRIBES OF LEPHRIPARA BLOCK OF SUNDARGARH

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Paper Received On: 12 May 2024 Peer Reviewed On: 28 May 2024 Published On: 01 June 2024

Abstract

Tribal people form a major segment of the world population. They are found all over the world. They are called by different names such as "primitive, 'tribal,' 'indigenous,' 'aboriginal,' 'native,' and so on. India has a large number of tribal people. According to Ralph Linton tribe is a group or bands occupying a contiguous territory or territories and having a feeling of unity deriving from numerous similarities in a culture, frequent contacts and a certain community of interest. L.M Lewis believes that tribal societies are small in scale are restricted in the spatial and temporal range of their social, legal and political relations and possess a morality, a religion and world view of corresponding dimensions. Characteristically too, tribal languages are unwritten and hence the extent of communication both in time and space is inevitably narrow. At the same time tribal societies exhibit a remarkable economy of design and have a compactness and self-sufficiency lacking in modern society. The tribal societies in India are considered as the weakest sections of the population in terms of common socio-economic and demographic factors such as poverty, illiteracy, lack of developmental facilities.

Keywords: Lephripara, Urbanization, Tribal economy, Paddy, Mahua, Horse gram

Introduction:

Sundargarh is the 2nd biggest district in terms of size and 6th biggest in terms of population. Two princely States, namely, the State of Gangpur and Bonai, together constitute the present district of Sundargarh. After the cancellation of the dominion of Sambalpur over Gangpur, the state was demarcated with an area of 2942 mile. It is bounded by Jashpur State and Ranchi district of the erstwhile British dominion in north; by Sambalpur, Bonai and Bamara States in south; Raigarh State of the erstwhile Central Province in the west. Ib River is called as the lifeline of Gangpur State. It enters the state from Jashpur. In Sambalpur, it joined the Mahanadi, but after division of Sambalpur district, Ib joins the Hirakud reservoir water at Brajrajnagar in Jharsuguda district. River Brahmani is another lifeline of Sundargarh district and at Panposh, both Sankh and Koel make the river Brahmani at the confluence called the holy shrine Vedvyas. This river system controls the entire production from agriculture in the state. Habitats are on both the sides of the river. Besides agriculture, Ib River was used as a means of transport. According to 2011 Census, the District has 20,

93,437 population, of which male constitutes 50.68 per cent and females 49.32 per cent. It is located between 21°35' N and 22°32' N latitudes and 83°32' E and 85°22' E longitudes ¹(Jana & Ghosh, 2015). Lephripara block is located 27 km away from the District headquarters. The block consists of 108 villages with a population of 70547 including 39589 tribal populations². (Census, 2011)

The Oraons and the Munda tribes dominate the population of the block and for study of this theme fifteen villages of the block such as- Amatpani, Hatituku, Kadligharia, Kaputikra, Kuaghara, Kunjnala, Lakraghara, Laxamanpaun, Litipani, Mandapani, Rakaskhol, Singarguda, Surulata, Taragarh and Timkinala surveyed to know the response of the concerned tribes to different facets of urbanization.

Objectives of the study:

Sundargarh is a tribal dominated district of Odisha. Lephripara block of Sundargarh is dominated by Munda and Oroan tribes. The objectives of the present study are:-

- ➤ To find out the present status of the tribal economy particularly of the Mundas and the Oraons.
- ➤ To ascertain changes in their traditional economic structure vis-à-vis the forces of modern process of urbanization.

Data Collection:

Both primary and secondary sources were consulted for the study of present theme. Primary data were collected in terms of field survey and questionnaire. A total fifteen villages of the Lephripara block were surveyed and more than 350 responses were collected to ascertain their status of economy and impact of urbanization on them. To make the topic analytical and informative secondary sources like books, journals, articles, periodicals, gazetteer etc were consulted.

Discussion:

Topography, Climate, Land and Soil: - Topographically, the district exhibits widely diversified tracts of mountains, forests and extensive river valleys with variegated flora and fauna and a rich bio-diversity. Sundargarh and Panposh sub-divisions are long and undulating tracts of varying heights up to about 700 ft. (213 meter) above the mean sea level, dotted with hill-ranges and isolated peaks of considerable height. Similarly, the Bonai sub-division is largely an isolated hilly tract with an average elevation of about 800 ft. (244 meter) above mean sea level. The total forest area is 496 thousand ha which is about 51 percent of the total geographical area of the district. The total permanent pasture land comprises 26 thousand ha. Barren and un-cultivable land comprises 66 thousand ha. Cultivable land of the district can be classified into four categories. Lands are mainly unbounded uplands which are less fertile and rain-fed. Maal lands are bounded uplands and terraced to catch rain water. Berna lands are medium or mid-low lands with average fertility.

Bahal lands are low lands, which are generally plain fertile lands suitable for paddy cultivation. Dangar lands are located on hill slopes and are occasionally utilized for shifting cultivation while Bari lands are adjacent to homestead lands and are used generally for kitchen gardens and cultivation of fruits and vegetables. The area, along the banks of major rivers namely Brahmani, Sankha and Koel are generally alluvial sandy and sandy loam spills.

The major soils of the district are red soil (alfisol), laterite and lateritic soils (ultisol and exisol) and black soil (vertisol) with patches of forest soil.

Location of Lephripara, the Study Area:

Lephripara is a tehsil in Sundargarh district of Odisha State, situated in rural part of Odisha; it is one of the 17 blocks of Sundargarh district. As per the government register, the block code of Lephripara is 31. The block has 108 villages and there are total 19750 homes in this block. As per census 2011, Lephripara's population is 78808. Out of this, 39454 are males while the females count 39354 here. Also as per census 2011, the literacy rate in Lephripara block is 60%.. In males the literacy rate is 67% while female literacy rate is 53%. The dark part is that illiteracy rate of Lephripara block is 39%. The number of employed individual of Lephripara block is 42362 whereas 36446 are un-employed. And out of 42362 working people 6777 peoples are fully reliant on farming. According to 2011 census total Scheduled tribe population of Lephripara is 39,589. Among them 19,734 are male and 19,855 are female. The percentage of scheduled tribe of Lephripara is 57.6 percent. Of the total scheduled tribe population, male population comprises 57.2 percent and female population 58.0 percent. ³(Ota, 2016)

Castes and Tribes:

Sundargarh District is predominantly a tribal District. As per the Census 2011, 50.74 per cent of the population of the District is scheduled tribes. The percentage of scheduled caste population is 9.15 per cent of the total population of the District. According to Census of India report, percentage of tribal population of this District was 50.19 in 2001. The people inhabiting the Panposh Sub-Division are mainly Mundas and Oraons. The Bhuiyans inhabiting the Bonai Sub-Division appearance belong to a different race than the dark complexioned Mundas and Oraon. Persons belonging to the Kisan tribe are also the major inhabitants of this District along with Oraons, Gond etc. They are peasants and food gatherers by profession. They speak the Kisan language along with Sadri, Sambalpuri, Odia, Hindi and English. The numerically important Scheduled Tribes in Sundargarh District are Oraon, Munda, Kharia, Kisan, Bhuyiyan and Gond

Main features of tribal economy:

The primitive societies have passed through several stages of economic development everywhere in the world. Thus one finds the stages of food gathering, hunting, fishing, farming etc. among the Indian tribes. Sabar, B. (2010). The tribes living in the forest and hills usually earn their livelihood by means of food gathering, hunting and fishing. A major portion of the tribal habitat is hilly and forested. Tribal villages are generally found in areas away from the alluvial plains close to rivers. Most villages are unique ethnic in composition, and similar in size. The tribal economy is characterized as subsistence oriented. The subsistence economy is based mainly on collecting, hunting and fishing or a combination of hunting and collecting with shifting cultivation. Even so-called plough using agricultural tribes do often, wherever scope is available, supplement their economy with hunting and collecting. Subsistence economy is characterized by simple technology simple division of labour, small- scale units of production and no investment of capital. The social unit of production, distribution and consumption is limited to the family and lineage. Subsistence economy is imposed by circumstances which are beyond the control of human beings,

poverty of the physical environment, ignorance of efficient technique of exploiting natural resources and lack of capital for investment. It also implies existence of barter and lack of trade. Considering the general features of their (i) eco-system, (ii) traditional economy, (iii) supernatural beliefs and practices, and (iv) recent "impacts of modernization", the tribes of Odisha can be classified into six types, such as: (1) Hunting, collecting and gathering type, (2) Cattle-herder type, (3) Simple artisan type, (4) Hill and shifting cultivation type, (5) Settled agriculture type and (6) Industrial urban worker type. Tribal communities cultivate valley bottoms as paddy lands and kitchen gardens. Traditionally they depend upon forest resources for their livelihood. Their dependence on forest is not merely for livelihood but for their cultural requirement.

Economic structure of tribal communities in the study area: -

The Munda and Oram tribes prefer to be settled in forest wherein they fulfil their day to day livelihood. Agriculture is a primary occupation of Munda and Oram tribes of Sundargarh district. Besides agricultural occupation few Munda and Oram population are engaged in wage labour that supplements their standard of life. In agriculture paddy is the chief crop. The Munda and Oram population in the study areas still practice the traditional methodologies of cultivation. Wooden plough and bullock are the primary agricultural implements. They use kodali, khurpi and sickles for vegetable cultivation. Among cereals, black gram, horse gram, peanut etc. are commonly cultivated by the Munda and Oram tribes. The land is a hereditary right of the tribes. They keep domestic animals cow, goat, pigs, sheep, bullock, buffaloes etc. from which they collect dung for agriculture purpose. They eat meat of goat, pig, sheep and hen, they use to rear. They sacrifice goat, hen, and cock etc. offer worship during community feast. In the study areas majority of Munda and Oram populations occupied cultivable land owned by their ancestors. Hunting, fishing and gathering forest products are also another way of subsistence of the Munda and Oram peoples of Lephripara block. They generally gather Minor Forest Produce (MFP) from forest along with a variety of edible roots, fruits, tubers, flowers, leaves, mushrooms, honey etc. The tribals now participate in small hunting games in which they catch the birds, rabbits etc. Agriculture is the most primitive occupation of the tribal people. The people had changed their cultivation pattern from shifting cultivation to settled cultivation, but some of the practices have remained unchanged among many groups of farmers. They are engaged in various traditional occupations like mixed farming, hunting and shifting cultivation to settled agriculture.

The slope area is used for cultivating the crops and various types of pulses like-Black gram (Biri), Horse gram (Kuluth) etc. Peanut is also cultivated by the tribal people. They prepare the land by using wooden plough and domesticated animal. Then they sow the crops on the prepared land. The tribal people preserve their grown crops after that they harvest. There is a kitchen garden (Bakri piri) in the back side of the tribal house. Various types of vegetables are grown in the garden. The tribal people of Lephripara cultivate Pumpkin), Brinjal, Papaya), Tomato, Bottle gourd, chili, potato etc. for their consumption. Much of their staple food they use to get from this garden. The Munda and Oram tribal people of Lephripara block follow the traditional method of agriculture and cultivation. They also use traditional equipments made by wood or bamboo. Wooden Dhenki is used for husking crops

or paddy. The tribals use hand winnowing baskets for removing the unwanted particles from the paddy grains. Paddy (Dhan) is their principal crop. They use different type of agricultural tools. They use wooden plough hoe, and wooden roller. Sickle is used for reaping crops. With the help of wooden plough they prepare their land for cultivation. Wooden roller is used for thrashing the crops. Domestication of animal is most common economic activity of the tribal people. Domestication is another way of subsistence of the tribal people followed by cultivation. They eat meat and egg of goat, pig, sheep and hen.

They keep domestic animals from which they collect dung for agriculture purpose. Cattle rearing are also supplementing their economy in a large scale. At the times of need, the tribal people also sell eggs and fowls for money. Cattle rearing are the one of the major way for consumption in their day to day life. They make house for these animals. These animals are one of the most important parts of their life. Various types of instruments are used by the tribal people for hunting and fishing which gain from a subsidiary part of their economic activity. Bow and arrow are the common weapons used in hunting. The bow and arrow are also used for their safety purpose. Net and traps are also used during catching and hunting animals. They usually catch fish by bamboo traps and nets during rainy season. Two type of bamboo fishing traps use for fishing. Battle axe, axe also use by the Munda and Oram people for cutting wood and also for hunting.

The subsistence economy is based on collecting, hunting and fishing. Hunting is the traditional way of economy of the tribal people. Forest has a special significance in the lives of the tribal people of Lephripara block. Forest is considered to be the most important source of livelihood. From forest the tribal people collect Mahua seeds, Mahua flower, Mushrooms, Honey, Kendu fruit, broom stick, Bamboo, some seeds etc. They also collect some fruits and plant like- Amla, Harida, Bahada, Bhuinlimb, Gangasiauli (locally know as Gut khedka), Maha sindur, Chiregudi. They use this plants and fruits as medicine. Wood is a common product collected by the tribal people from forest. Collection of forest products is also one of the important sources of subsidiary income. Broom or jonos made of the briny grass are used by Munda women to sweep the floors. The tribal people mostly collect different roots, fruits, tubers, and mushroom for personal consumption. The tribal women weave mats from date leaves and prepare broom sticks from wild grass. They collect date leaves from forest and after drying the leaves then the tribal women weave mat (Patia) from the dry date leaves. The tribal know how to use the forest product. They have a clear knowledge about the useful plants collected from forest.. Wood plays a vital role in their economy as well as in their livelihood. Forest is chief source for their income, food and other works in their day to day life. Because of the habit of intoxication the tribal people plant tobacco in the vicinity of their house .They collect the tobacco leaves (Bhang) and dry it. After that they husk the dry leaves and prepare tobacco and use it. The Munda and Oram people use various types of household objects.

They use both traditional and modern type of household articles. They use different types bamboo baskets, grinding stone, patia (mat), earthen pots, and broomstick etc. the tribal people purchased different verities of modern utensils from the local markets (haats), the bamboo basket also available in the local market. Collection of forest product is the way of their subsistence, as well as they made household articles from the forest products. In the

paddy straw they make rope, sitting pedestal. The Munda and Oram people have sufficient indigenous knowledge how to use forest product. The paddy stalks have been collected and dried up. Then the paddy stalks are threshed on the ground with the help of bullock and the roller. In this process paddy grain are separated from the stalks.

Winnowing is a process of removing the unwanted particles from the paddy grain. The tribal people followed the age old practice of agriculture. But now they also know about the modern techniques of agriculture. They also migrated from the village to their agricultural land because of better cultivation or for taking care of their crops. They have also been working as wage labor the Government sponsored projects like MGNREGA Scheme. With the development of technologies the tribal people are being slowly influenced in the way of modernization.

Impact of Forest in the Economy of the District:

The forests occupy an area of 2665 miles (5826 km or over 70 per cent of that of the district: reserved forests cover 995 miles (2562 km) and protected forests 1670 miles (3264 km). The entire forest area is under the administrative control of two divisional forest officers with headquarters at Bonaigarh and Sundargarh. Sundargarh division comprises 563 miles (1440 km) reserved and 860 miles (2200 km) protected forests and Bonai division covers 432 miles (1122 km) reserved and 810 miles (1064 km) protected forests. The people of the district depend upon the forest to a large extent. Their requirements consist of mainly of timber for house building, agricultural implements bullock-carts; bamboo for fencing, roofing and basket making; grass for thatching and rope making; and fuel for the kitchen. Demand for grazing is also met from the forest. The poor people search out from the forest edible roots, leaves, fruits and flowers for their living. The carpenters, basket makers and blacksmiths require timbers, bamboos and firewood in large quantities than the ordinary cultivators for their profession. Apart from the excellent revenue obtained from the sale of forest produce, the various works taken up in the forest involve utilization of manual labour. In the season when labour is not utilized for agriculture, people get employment in various works of the forest like picking of kendu leaves, cutting of timber, rearing cocoons and collecting lac. Other minor forest produce like mohua flowers and seeds, etc. are collected by the local villagers and sold or bartered in the weekly markets in exchange of salt, rice and other necessities.

Analytical Discussion:

For the last few decades and more particularly since 1990s the issue of human rights violation of rights to life and livelihood of tribal people is a central concern. Therefore, the discourse on tribal movements and issues of tribal livelihood revolved around securing their well-defined rights on land and forest resources. There has been a continuous effort since independence by the government to raise the economic condition of tribal people. With the development of science and infrastructure, industrialization exerts profound impact on the various aspects of tribal society. With the emergence of Government offices in strategic places, land has come to be used for markets, churches, temples and educational institutions. With the spread of Education, young tribal people have entered into a new field of industrial economy and job markets.

The growth of industrialization, urbanization and cash economy has greatly affected tribal livelihoods. The destruction bio-mass to meet the urban and industrial needs leading to deforestation is having a major impact on the lives of peoples who live within the nonmonetized, biomass based subsistence economic. The present paradigm of development, emphasizing on urbanization and industrialization has not only accelerated this process but also caused displacement of tribal population from their habitats. Economic development and social development are complementary to each other. In the context of tribal communities development has to strike a balance between economic and social domains and has to be culture specific. The economic and socio- cultural life of these community people depend upon their physical environment or ecological condition, educational status.

With dawn of independence, the wind of change is blowing in the interior tribal pockets as well. The Munda people are now passing through a phase of transition. With the development of science and infrastructure, industrialization exerts profound impact on the various aspects of Munda society ⁵(Op.Cit. Ota). Most Munda are agriculturalists; increasingly, permanent irrigated sites are replacing the traditional methods. The other main traditional occupation is hunting and gathering, though they participate in these activities to some extent to supplement their agriculture. Today, however, government policy is to preserve the remaining forests, which are now much depleted.

Growth of industry in Sundargarh (industrial economy, job market):

The industrial development provides better job opportunities to the people and improves the overall infrastructure of the region. The district occupies a prominent position in the mineral map of the state. The important minerals available in the district are iron-ore, limestone, manganese, dolomite, and fire-clay. Sundargarh district is also known as their mining activity. Mining leases for mineral based industries for value addition so as to promote industrialization in the state. The impact of mining and industrialization in their habitat which many of them have embraced has changed their traditional way of life to a great extent. Availability of plenty of minerals, especially coal, iron ore, bauxite, manganese, zinc, limestone etc. has attracted many industries to the District. These industrial and mining units have directly created huge demand for work force of different kinds, like, highly skilled, skilled, semiskilled and unskilled population. Employment in the service sector has increased in order to cater different services to the growing population in the District.

Role of tribal Haats:-

Tribal Haats (local market) are regarded as the backbone of tribal economy. These are temporary weekly markets organized at regular intervals in designated places where the tribal people gather with their goods from their remote uphill settlement. Fishing, hunting and agricultural equipment along with food items and artful handicrafts, unique handmade earthen, metallic and wooden utensils and other products are easily available in these haats. The Munda and Oram people get an opportunity for social interaction with their friends and relatives in this place.

Emergence of Government offices and programs:

Government has launched development programs exclusively for tribal areas and tribal people with two fold objectives i.e., economic upliftment of tribal beneficiaries through income generating scheme and area development through infrastructure development under various sectors of state plan. Urban and industrial development, Government initiatives by establishment of IDTAs in tribal populated areas has created a lot of positive impact on development of education, agriculture, communication, drinking water, housing, health and sanitation. The ITDAs have also taken up financing of subsidy to the bankable projects to the Scheduled Tribe Loaners under Differential Rate of Interest (DRI) loans as well as normal loans for crop, animal husbandry, transport and household and cottage industries⁶(Odisha,2015). Besides, award of stipend to Scheduled Tribe students in all the educational institutions including their own schools like Ashram Schools, Shevashrams and High Schools is carried out.

Role of women:-

Tribal women plays key role in the well-being of the family. In developing countries women in tribal and rural areas are often considered as invisible farmers. Besides engaging themselves in a variety of activities both in the farm and at home, the farm women also contribute to the family income through their wage earnings. The tribal women are endowed with several activities starting from agriculture, collection of MFP (Minor Forest Product), cattle rearing, labour works and horticulture, and contribute more to the family income. The lower the socio-economic status of the family, the higher is the contribution of women towards their family income. The tribal women have been equal partners with tribal men in the contribution to household economy.

Spread of Education:

The spread of education among the weaker sections of the tribal society is vital as education is a prime requisite for socio-economic development. The development of any village depends on peoples' literacy rate. Education is in fact, an input not only for economic development of tribes but also for inner strength of the tribal communities which helps them in meeting the new challenges of life. With the spread of education, Munda young people have entered into the field of industrial economy and job market. Most of the old members of the tribal community are illiterate. But due to the effect of modernization, they are now coming forward. They are trying to give education to their children. Now they are aware about the government reservation policy and they think that if their children get education then they can get government services and be better off in the larger society. In the study area there is an Anganwadi situated on the top of the hill. The tribal children are benefited and get education. The Anganwadi works in an interior village which is situated in deep forest. But, they need to be more resourceful and trained.

Development in agriculture:

Agricultural modernization has since long been introduced in the tribal areas of Lephripara, primarily with a view to raise the level of income, standard of living and lifestyle of the tribal people. Changes in agriculture are a new way to improve the economic condition of the Munda and Oram people of Lephripara. Introduction of multiple cropping, input assistance, market assurance, banking linkage etc. have strengthened their foothold in agriculture. At present, in Odisha or Sundergarh, the Oraon have become one of the most progressive tribes. In the field of agriculture they use chemical fertilizers, pesticides, improved seeds and modern technique. The farmers, mostly from the Munda and Oram tribal communities, further modified the composition of organic fertilizers and pesticides by using

molasses rich mahua instead of jaggery as the former is available in plenty in their vicinity and in the nearby forest.

Conclusion:-

The study leads to conclude that, the Munda and Oram tribes of Lephripara block of Sundargarh District still thrive on subsistence economy. Agriculture is still primitive. Forest resource continues to play a vital role in their economic structure and livelihood. The typical tribal characteristics like traditional agriculture, high illiteracy rate, primitive technology, lack of road and other infrastructure and low per capita income still plague them. In spite of continued state intervention and process of urbanization impact in the study area is extremely minimal. This is due to a number of reasons like apathy of government officials and their unwillingness to work in inaccessible areas, slow response of the tribals to the process of change. For example the villagers of Hatituku, Amatpani, Kunjunala, Kuaghara, Kadligharia, Lakraghara, Laxamanpaun, Litiapani, Mandapani, Singarguda, Surulata, Timkinala, Taragarh, Rakaskhol, and Kaputikra etc. when interviewed expressed their reluctance to work in MGNREGA Scheme as they have to walk two miles or more from their residence. Many Munda and Oram workers are afraid to leave their habitat and work elsewhere. They are still comfortable in growing vegetables like pumpkin, bottle gourd, tomato, brinjal, ladies finger etc. in small scale and sell in the local market.

They still consider forest produce as the chief source of their livelihood. As a result the economy is largely subsistence economy. They struggle hard to satisfy their basic needs. Many villages like Hatituku, Amatpani, Kunjunala, Kuaghara, Kadligharia,Lakraghara, Laxamanpaun, Litiapani, Mandapani, Singarguda, Surulata, Timkinala, Taragarh, Rakaskhol, and Kaputikra are still not connected with pucca roads. Urbanization has little impact on the economy of these tribals communities. Modern amenities like fan, television are extremely rare. State interventions with different financial and developmental policies have not been effective. In such a scenario the Mundas and Orams of Lephripara block still primarily depend on forest produce and traditional agricultural practice for their livelihood. Spread of education is abysmally slow in tribal pockets. Anganwadis are not resourceful for intellectual progress of the children. They primarily focus on distributing food to the children. The children are expected to suffice the subsistence economy rather than intellectual pursuits. Most houses were thatched house made of mud and timber.

The Government machinery should be more proactive in implementing developmental programs adopting participatory approach. Nothing for them without them should be the approach. More and more local people should be employed to take care of their own development. The Eco-Tourism project in Sarafgarh is such an encouraging step empowering local people through SSG.

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