

# TRIBE AND MAJOR THREAT TO TRIBAL CULTURE IN WESTERN ODISHA: A THEORETICAL BACKGROUND WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BALANGIR DISTRICT

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## ABSTRACT-

The tribal society is an enigma to the world of culture and heritage. The tribal culture of western Odisha encompasses the collective and diverse custom, tradition of art, architecture, music, literature, life style philosophy and religion that have been practiced and maintained by different tribal group in western Odisha since pre historic period. In an increasingly globalization modernization urbanization, preserving the cultural heritage of tribal people remains a problem and environmental pressures, economic incentives and religious missionaries work continue to endangered the existence of indigenous culture in western Odisha .When the urban development since 1947 started much of the tribal precious cultural heritage both in terms of tradition and assets are disappearing steadily . Tribal culture maintains order, balance with nature and natural as well as super natural forces through their disposition, felling, attitude and manner. One does not exist with other. Therefore the tribal man and their culture are inseparable and considered being two sides of the same coins. In this paper an attempt has been made to highlight on Tribe and their culture in western Odisha with special reference to Bolangir district. But how the tribal in western Odisha have undergone change in religious practices, customs and tradition with the changing time? This is the chief objective of my study.

Keywords:- Culture, Tribe, Threat

## INTRODUCTION-

The word 'tribe' refers to a cultural heritage, historical identity, and concept. It is used for the tribes separate group of persons having their own identity, they are popularly known as Adibasi, Banabasi and girijana in Odisha .These community in western Odisha represented an important social category of India social structure. They are considered as the original inhabitants of India, who carry forward a legacy of rich and distinct cultural traits for many decades. The western part of Odisha is home to one of the richest concentration of indigenous cultures on earth. Bolangir district is well known among all the district of western Odisha for its cultural elements of tribal's i.e. rituals (sulia jatra), festivals, folk dance and song and folk tales. But over two decades, the world has experienced rapid changes in economy urban development as well as in arts and culture and life styles. Modernization and urbanization brought these rapid changes. The speed of mining and establishment of manufacturing industries as well as the exploitation of power and forest resources has been greatly accelerated this has led to high degree of displacement and caused large scale of migration. They lost their traditional occupation for livelihood and had to face numerous social problems cultural crisis and economic disorganizations. Since independence till date the tribal are affected by use of land and forest. The tribal's in western Odisha have undergone change in religious practices, custom, tradition with the changing time, not only to be a part of modernized world but to be acceptable society. Most of the tribal converted themselves due to outside force and some from the influences of the society and some transformed themselves for betterment of life. Therefore the conservation of traditional and tribal culture is all the more urgent and crucial.

**OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY -**

1. To analysis the tribe and their culture in Western Odisha with special reference to Bolangir district
2. To study on major threat to tribal culture in Western Odisha

**LITERATURE REVIEWS-**

The literature related to the study tribe and serious threat to their culture in Western Odisha. There are many studies in Odisha, abroad highlighting the tribal culture in Western Odisha. Since the age of Ramayana and Mahabharata, the tribal of the area occupy a putative rule. It is in such part of Odisha that we can have folk literature in its must thriving entire region of Western Odisha. The tribal sings and dance while they practices rituals, ceremonies and observe festivals in the different part of Western Odisha. This brought on folk literature away in the dim past. Certain mystic poems were composed, these are Dhemsas, Dhaps, Changs, Ghumras, Karamsanis, Dalkhais and Sulasuangas composed by village author.

Bolanger district of western Odisha has a rich collection of folk tales. Even today in many tribal villages song of Hara-Pārbati (Karamsanis) and Kandhenbudhi are sing every night in the village street. Many village poets have contributed their song offering to some festivals.

Dr. Dadhibaman Mishra(2013), Dr Chitaranjan pasayate, Dr Haripria Das Swain(2009), Dr. Bhagbana Sahu(2015), Nityananda Pattanaik(2005), Hitesh mahapatra(2017) Jitamiytra Prasad Sing Deo, Prof. G.P. Guru and P.L. Das, Devki Mondal, Dr. Smita Mohanty and some other writers have significant to tribal literature in Western Odisha. The paper of many social scientists and scholarly discuss the tribal's and major threat to their culture in Western Odisha. They also throw much light about the religious life, custom, rituals, ceremonies and festivals of tribal in Bolangir district.

Anil Ota (2015)- Analyzed the disappearing the material culture of tribal's in India with special reference to Odisha. The primary object of the study was to outline the various exogenous factors affecting the material culture of the tribal's community. Prof. Sinorita Dash, Dr. Bimal Choudhry and Debasis Routh (2013) - Conducted study on technical knowledge of tribal culture. The main motives of their study was to outline the source of Indigenous technical knowledge of tribal community in Odisha. Dr. Vinaya Kumar (2014) - Conceived a study on preservation of tribal culture and tradition. The main motives of the study were to discuss the rule of media for preservation of tribal culture. Dr. Vanita Dhingra and Purushotam (2017) - Conducted study on different tribal area. Dr. Alok Chantia and Dr. Priti Mishra (2015) – Analyzed the rights of scheduled tribe of India and they also mentions about the cultural and language rights of tribal communities. Dr. Chitaranjan Passayat (2009) - Conducted study on the culture of tribal communities of Bolangir district in Western Odisha. They used both primary and secondary data for research article.

**DATA AND METHODOLOGY-**

This study is based on the tribe and major threat to their culture in specific areas i.e. Kalahandi Nuapara, Sonapur district in western Odisha with special reference to tribe and their culture of Bolangir district in Western Odisha. These areas have been selected because of the large concentration of tribal STs Population. For this study I use Human Development Report-2004, Government of Odisha and other primary data collected from Census of India Report 2011. The secondary data is obtained from Books, Journals, News paper and on line resources will be taken in to account of the study.

## PROFILE OF THE STUDY-

The state of Odisha is situated on the eastern coast of India. It is surrounded by West Bengal to the north-east, Chhattisgarh to the west, Jharkhand to the north-east and Andhrapradesh to the south east. The state has 30 districts, 58 subdivision, 171 tahsils and 314 blocks. The population of Odisha constitutes 3.6% of the population of the country. As per the census of 2011, the total population of the state is 41,974,218 with 14.05% population growth rate. The state of Odisha has relatively large component of tribal population, 21.1% of the total population as per the 2011 censuses. Similarly scheduled caste constitutes 17.3% of the state. The state has remained one of the poorest in the country in the term of social and economic aspect. This is particularly true among the tribal and dalit population mainly residing in the western part of Odisha. Now this western part of Odisha popularly known as Koshal, extending from Kalahandi district in the south to the sundargargh district in the north-west. Western Odisha (Koshal) includes the district of Sambalpur, Bargarh, Bolangir, Sonepur, Nuaparara Boudh, Jhirsuguda, Sundargargh. This is a vast geographical area inhabiting a great degree of cultural uniformity in the term of demography and life style. Geographically Western Odisha is mostly mountains and hilly with rivers and valleys. Western Odisha is region that has a distinct cultural identity. The songs, clothing, dances, language, fair and festival celebrated in Western Odisha are unique. This distinct cultural identities arises from the strong association of the tribal and folk communities, which have been co existing in Western Odisha for centuries. Among all these districts of western Odisha, Bolangir is rich of cultural heritage. Present Bolangir district is part of the chain of poverty struck district in Odisha popularly known as KBK (Kalahandi, Bolangir and Koraput). It is an important state has been under the chuhans since 1400 AD. Thereafter under the British rule, the region were made part of several administrative divisions. Finally it becomes separate district in 1948, and then it is under backwardness, hunger and poverty. Despite all this social-economic and political disparities, the tribal people of the area contributed much. From unknown past it was a home land of many tribes. There are around 31 scheduled tribes in district. They have been regarded as an integral part of our society and culture. But due to urbanization, modernization and climate change most of the people of Bolangir and other KBK district in western odisha migrate to remote area (Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu, Utterpradesh, etc). It has brought major cultural changes of tribal's in western Odisha. While analyzing the tribe and their culture in western Odisha with special reference to Bolangir district, this study also makes an attempt to show the major threat to tribal culture in western Odisha.

## TRIBES AND THEIR COULTURE IN WESTERN ODISHA

The English word 'Tribe' has come from Latin word 'tribes' which signifies a particular type of common and political organization, which is alive in all these societies and the term used for indigenous groups that shared a culture, language and territory as a component of modern tribal worlds. The way of life of tribal people is based on sustainable use of local ecosystem. The tribal population is found in almost all parts of odisha. It is also largest tribal state in the country with as many as 62 tribes of Odisha are known as Adivasis, Vanavasi, and Girijanas. They are strong industries and very hospitable in nature. Their society lives in isolated area and their socio cultural life style is different from the main stream of society. Few tribes of western Odisha have been influenced by outside tradition but most of the tribe has taken great care that they return their old custom, rituals, art, crafts, song and festivals are the most visible from of their culture. There culture encompasses the collective and divorce custom and tradition of art, life style and religion that have been practiced and maintained by the numerous tribal groups of western Odisha since pre-history. These tribal populations are concentrated in many parts of Western Odisha i.e. Bolangir, Sonepur, Nuapara, Kalahandi, Boudh and Sundargargh. God fearing people warship numerous god and goddess and observe many festivals and rituals i.e. chaitya parab pusha parab, salaipuja, Karamsani, etc. They are very much dependent on forest for their day to day needs. I describe about few selected tribes and their culture in western Odisha. They are as follows –

The Kondh tribe- Kondh are famous in history for their meriah (human sacrifices). At the present the kondhs are identified as Desia Kondh, Dongoria kondh, Kutias kondhs are found in the different parts of Western Odisha. They speak kue language and used ornament of gold and silver and they also used color beads. Kondh are religious nature. They too offer prayers to their ancestors and observe a number of ceremonies in order to please the gods and ancestors by offering sacrifices. Of all goddess and gods, the goddess earth as most important. They had no caste system but they maintain a social distance by an observance called 'Bisa'. Kondhs in western Odisha celebrated three principal festivals in the namely semijatra, mahua jatra, and choul dhua jatra.

The Kharia tribe- The three section of the tribe lie at three diverse stages of economic scale. The hill Kharia handles to live on food gathering and hunting, the Dhelki kharias on agricultural work and the doudh Kharia on cattle agriculture. Commonly Kharia women make mats. There are three important rituals and ceremonies observe by the Kharias relating to the birth, marriage and death (ear boring, hair tying and sika). Ceremonies during the first pregnancy called 'Dorho jodum' observed by Kharias and they warship the deities of Nag Deo, Jal Deo, Gram Deo, Fire gods, etc.

The Kisan –They are shifting cultivators and food gathers but at the present, they have adopted paddy cultivation. During 19th century most of them were laborer and agricultural workers. The most important festivals i.e. phagu parab, sarhul, pusha parab observe by the kisan tribe. The Kisan religion reveals their value in soul, super human power. They believe that all living and non living things hold super human control.

The Munda tribe – They were hunters and wanders and now they have adopted cultivation. They are famous in Odisha for their basket work and weaving. The culture of Munda people is a blend of Sarnaism and Christian cultures. The munda people have a rich range of folk songs, dances and tails as well as traditional musical instruments. They observe seasonal festival of karam, sarhul, sorai, etc. Indigenous Munda follows Sarnaism and sarnaism reveals the belief in a god called 'sing bong'.

The Soura tribe – Soura famous for their painting in history. They are a dwindling jungle tribe and practiced shifting cultivation. They worshiped lord Narasimha, Jhankerdevata and large numbers of deities and spirit.

The Santal tribe – They fulfill their basis needs from forest and now they are engaged in hunting, fishing and migrating to industrial rich area. Dance is the important parts of their fairs and festivals. They follow Sauria religion and celebrated baba bang, sorai, karma, etc, festivals.

Apart from these tribes Oran, Kolha, Binjhal, Kuda, and other tribes are found in the different parts of Western Odisha.

#### TRIBE AND THEIR COULTURE IN BOLANGIR DISTRICT –

Paddy fields cover everywhere with island of Sal, neem, jammun, ber, palm, mango, she sham, bamboos and hill crowd in on many sides of tribal area in the district. Saura, kondh, Gond, santhal and other tribes inhabiting in many villages. They wedging between fields and mountains for earning. On winter morning before the fog has lifted kolha, mankardia, and kondh, are out in the paddy fields, tilling soil, building bonds repair railing, gather fire wood for cultivation.

The geography, geology, climate, and ecosystem of this region play a vital role in almost all aspect of tribal society and the natural resources such as water and fertile soil are vital for survival of tribal in different parts of Bolangir district.

Population Distribution of Scheduled Tribe –



The tribes are scattered in all parts of Bolangir district, constitutes 21.05% of the total population. Broadly the STs inhabit all blocks of Bolangir district i.e. – Agalpur- 12.73%(12,268), Loisinga-18.34%(17,595), Patanagargh- 31.43%(41,113), Khoprakhol-34.39%(32,651), Belpara-34.55%(44,283), Tureikela-34.94%(28,924), Bongomunda- 15.99%(18,726), Muribahal-23.73%(27,259), Titalagargh-19.86%(24,183) , Saintala-19.89%(23,913), Deogaon- 20.41%(19,939), Bolangir-21.12%(21,749), Puintala-6.78%(7,579) , Tentulikhunti- 28.61% 17,805 . Among these all blocks of Bolangir district, Tureikela has the highest population of the STs and Puintala the lowest 6.78% with the respect to Khoprakhol block has the highest proportion of scheduled tribes.



### POPULATION DISTRIBUTION (SCHEDULED TRIBE) DIST-BOLANGIR

Source- Census of India 2011

Bolangir district is well known to the country for its rituals (sulia jatra), folk culture and tradition. Kolha, Gond, saura kuda, mirdha, binjhal and other tribal group have enriched the cultural heritage of district by their cultural diversities and folk tradition. They celebrated numerous rituals and festivals many times in the year and made their life colorful. The folk tradion of this area may be divided into three categories -1. Agriculture oriented 2.Rituals oriented 3. Festivals oriented.

Kondh, mirdha, santhal, kuda, and other tribals celebrated many festivals i.e. semi jatra, gundikhai, chowl dhua, jatra. They also observe a number of ceremonies in order to please the gods and ancestors by offering sacrifices, kondh of this area are famous in history for their 'Meriah' (human sacrifices). Sulia jatra is prevalent among the kondh tribe in kondh dominated areas (Kharguda, Kharlikani, Chandpur, etc.), Sulia jatra is observed on the first Thursday of pousa sukla pakshya (last week of December). The ritual start with the worship of Suliababa (Mahadev) and the chief tribal priest (deheri) brings the shakti to the field (Badkhala) meant for animal sacrifices, Authorities had banned Sulia jatra, yet the tribals continue. Chief of kondh, Sanatan Dheheri (2008) say - "This is our tradition for centuries, we cannot stop this, come what may". Similarly Barapahar jatra is observe by Binjhal community in different area of Bolangir district. The important ceremonies of kharia tribe is observed during the first pregnancy called 'Durho Jodum'. Kisan and munda are observe sarhul, karam, phagu, etc. Soura religion is much elaborated in this region and they worship lord Narasimha.

Each tribal festival has extraordinary song and dance style linked with them. Most of the tribes of this area have devoted to Shakti and they enjoy dances and performances belonging to their faith with traditional ornaments. Bolangir has also a huge mixture of tribal dance form exclusive to Odisha culture i.e. Danguda, Mudgada, Ghumara, Sadhna, Saber –Saberen, etc. There is generally danced through young women of Binjhal, Kuda, Mirdha, Sama and other several tribes of Bolangir district in which men link them as Drummers and Musicians with musical instruments i.e. Dhap –Chang, Tall, Mahuri, Ghudka, Mandal and Dhul-Nisan. They performed Karma (Rustic dance) in the worship of Hara-Pārbati for good and bad fortune, this is accepted by binjhal, kharia, kisan, kolha and several other tribes in Bolangir district. Karamsani and Kandhenbudhi are two important tales in these area that performed spiritual function. It perhaps started with the people sharing their experience with one another after day work. These folk cultures of Bolangir district reflect the day to day life i.e. social relationship, worship, behavior manner, etc.

#### MAJOR THREAT TO TRIBAL CULTURE IN WESTERN ODISHA –

Culture generated a new horizon of evaluation which made the concept of differentiation on the ground of religion, race, sex, caste, color and state was divided into Tribal, Rural and Urban area. The whole tribal society at the present movement is going through the critical stage of transformation. Various modernizing forces have brought rapid transformation in their whole socio-cultural factors. Cultural inter-mixture is an increase and this sure to effect perceptible change in the life style of tribal people in this area. Till date it is not being preserved, today the rich cultural elements and life style under serious threat. Food, drink, dress, believes and decorated human body and houses –everything is a part of culture, their song, dance and art object provides distinct of a culture. Cultural, technological and economic changes have eradicated many indigenous groups throughout the world. Numerous tribal culture died out between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. When the urban development started, much of the tribal precious cultural heritage disappearing steadily in Odisha. The tribal culture of western Odisha witnessed several changes, particularly since independence in India. The impact can be seen much in the field culture.

#### Modernization and Urbanization-

There is no doubt change in cultural practice is in the process of development of society. Modern practice, which has been created by modernization and urbanization, has brought changes in many parts of Western Odisha. The whole tribal society in western Odisha at the present moment is going through the transformation of various modernizing forces (spread of global education, awareness, commercialization, impact mass and media, etc.) have brought transformation in their socio-cultural background. The agricultural people from tribal village face great trouble; they lost their traditional occupation for livelihood. Those affected families were given reasonable compensation; they had to face numerous social problems, cultural crises and economic disorganization. Many activities such as building infrastructure, setting of industries, constructing dams for irrigation, power project for electricity and exploitation of minerals and forest resources were initiated in the area where the tribal were settled. Tribal areas (Bolangir,

Sundargargh and Sambalpur) of western Odisha have also seen entry of people from outside in search of employment. These activities have not only given rise to increasing urbanization of tribal areas but also have caused large scale migration of non tribal into tribal territory, depriving the tribal's of fruits of development in their own areas that brings tribe into increasing contact with other groups . Consequently it threat to tribal culture in tribal areas of western Odisha.

#### Industrialization and Migration-

Due to industrialization, the tribal people have displaced from their traditional livelihood. Extensive mining of Pan posh, Saintala, Banai, Bargargh have destroyed dance forest and fortaile agricultural lands. It has resulted not only in the change in their socio-cultural life but also pattern of settlement and health status. The process of migration of the tribal has brought various changes in the activities, old tradition and coustom. They have been influenced by the people and the new cultural traits at the place of destination. In this sense migration has exposed them to various aspects of modernity. It is often argued that migration does not necessarily bring any qualitative change in the life pattern of migrants but discourage the tribals to migrate as it would destroy their old practices and customs. Kolha, gond, kondh, saura, etc. of western Odisha have been migrating to the tea garden of Assm, brick factory of Tamilnandu and other industrial rich area. That reason migrants adopting the new cultural practices, new ideology, and believes and they also join the new society. They may also bring these changes to the place of origin.

#### Adaptation New Technology –

Similarly modernization, adaptation new technology affecting the material culture of tribal in this area. Most of the material colture i.e. weaponry (bow, arrow and sword), musical instrument (trumpet and sarangi) agricultural hunting impliments (billhook, sickle, bird trap) and ornament of women (brass, bangles and peacock feathers) steadily disappearing.

Conversion - Now the whole tribal society in western Odisha is going through the critical stage of transformation. Conversions have brought rapid transformation in their whole socio cultural background. During the British rule in India. Some Christian missionary entire into the area. However, after independence the tribal began to be exposed to forces of development and modernization in the slow. Over the year displacement, labour migration conversion and rapid acculturation of this population has led dramatic change change in their culture and rapid industrialization in this area has devastated the live and culture of different tribes. Therefore the conservation of traditional tribal culture is all the more urgent and crucial.

#### CONCLUSION –

However on the account of the above discussion I can say that the tribal people of Western Odisha have rich tradition and culture with unique life style and custom. Tribal area of Bolangir district is occupied prominent place in the country due to her cultural elements. But due to modernization and urbanization, the tribal people face cultural crisis. Various welfare measures initiated by the government have resulted in exposing the tribal more and to outside contact. Industrialization and urbanization has devastated the live and culture of tribes. For that reason the conservation of traditional tribal culture is all the more urgent and crucial.

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