

# Socio-Economic Profile of Tribal Populations in Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar Districts

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## **Introduction**

India being the second largest tribal dominated area after Africa is one of the most fascinating Nations of World from anthropological point of view. The total tribal population of India is 8.08 per cent (Census of India, 2001). As many as 427 tribal communities are residing in India, of whom 75 are declared as primitive tribal groups who are spread across the country. Bhill, Gond and Santal are the major tribes of India, while Onje, Andamanese, Chenchu, and Mankirdia are the minor tribes of India (on the basis of numerical strength). The tribal communities in India are largely concentrated in Central India region and North-East India region, which are specially treated under 5<sup>th</sup> Schedule and 6<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Indian Constitution respectively.

Orissa is a tribal dominated State with the largest number of tribal communities (62), representing major linguistic groups like Dravidian, Austro-Asiatic and Indo-Aryan. They have been found at varied levels of acculturation, integration and assimilation with the caste Hindu societies of the State. Almost 44.21 per cent of the total land area in Orissa have been declared as Scheduled area. The total tribal population of the State is 8.15 million, who constitute 22.13 per cent (ibid). Of 30 administrative districts, 6 districts like

Koraput, Rayagada, Nabarangpur, Malkangiri, Mayurbhanj and Sundargarh are declared as fully Scheduled districts. Whereas there are 7 other districts declared as partially Scheduled districts.

The paper aims to provide a brief profile of tribal population of Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar districts of Northern Orissa. More specifically it describes certain characteristics of the demographic, socio-cultural life and livelihood of the tribal people living in the districts.

## **Mayurbhanj District Overview**

Mayurbhanj is a land-locked district with a total geographical area of 10,418 Sq.Km. and is situated in the Northern boundary of the State with District Headquarters at Baripada. The district lies between 21° 17' and 22° 34' North latitude and 85°40' and 87°11' East longitudes. The district is bounded on the North by Midnapore district of West Bengal, Singhbhum district of Jharkhand, and on the west by Keonjhar district and on the East by Balasore district. The total population of the district as per 2001 census is 22, 71,970 out of which 11, 58,705 are males and 11, 13,266 are females. The literacy rate of Mayurbhanj ranks 23rd place among all the districts of the State. The literacy rate of male is 66.38 per cent and female rate is 38.28 per cent (2001, Census).

The district is unique in size, having Similipal Biosphere Reserve, large tribal population and their unique culture, famous Chhau Folk dance, rich archaeological evidence and so on.

### Tribal Profile of the District

Mayurbhanj is one of the tribal dominated districts of Orissa, which has been declared as the fully Scheduled district of the State. With four Sub-divisions Baripada and Kaptipada are the part of the plain areas and Bamanghati and Panchapirha are the hilly tribal dominated region of the district. Out of 26 Blocks the tribals are more concentrated in Udala, Khunta, Bijatala, Jamda, and Baripada Blocks where the population varies from 70 per cent to 80 per cent of the total population of respective Blocks. The tribes constitute 56.6 per cent of total population of the district, though the population of Mayurbhanj is only 6 per cent of the State's total population (Table 1 and 3).

**Table 1: Block-wise distribution of ST population in Mayurbhanj District**

Sl No	Block	Total Population	ST population	per cent of ST Population
1	Bahalda	75,842	42,679	56.27
2	Bangiriposi	91,603	62,151	67.84
3	Barasahi	1,30,850	63,883	48.82

4	Baripada	60,341	43,284	71.73
5	Betnati	1,28,908	52,122	40.43
6	Bijatola	58,174	44,567	76.6
7	Bisoi	66,724	45,266	67.84
8	Gopabandhu nagar	66,309	35,665	53.78
9	Jamda	55,801	41,198	73.83
10	Jashipur	88,845	59,888	67.4
11	Karanjia	81,390	50,527	62.06
12	Kaptipada	1,26,371	80,347	63.58
13	Khunta	68,528	53,577	78.18
14	Kuliana	88,647	58,522	66.01
15	Kusumi	82,188	52,146	63.44
16	Morada	94,632	39,874	42.13
17	Raruan	59,041	29,914	50.66
18	Rairangpur	56,056	29,943	53.41
19	Rash-gobindpur	83,632	44,764	53.52
20	Saraskana	89,374	50,770	56.8
21	Shamakhunta	70,889	45,641	64.38
22	Suliapada	92,108	26,666	28.95
23	Sukruli	52,239	27,551	52.74
24	Thakurmunda	90,115	57,034	63.29
25	Tiring	48,556	26,231	54.02
26	Udala	66,857	49,086	73.41

Source: Census 2001

**Table 3: An overview of Tribal Demography in Mayurbhanj District**

Population in million			Literacy		Female literacy		No. of STs Inhabiting	No. of PTGs Inhabiting	Numerically Major Tribe
Total	ST	per cent of STs	Total	STs	Total	STs			
2.22	1.26	56.6	47.37	38.8	37.84	23.51	30	3	Santal

Source: Tribes in Orissa at a Glance, 2008, SCSTRTI.

**Table 2: Municipality / Urban and NAC- wise ST population in Mayurbhanj District**

SI No	Municipality / Urban & NAC	Total Population	ST Population	Per cent of ST Population
1	Baripada (Urban)	1,00,651	15,712	15.61
2	Karanjia (NAC)	21,441	5,638	26.29
3	Rairangpur (NAC)	21,896	3,827	17.47
4	Udala (NAC)	11,712	2,699	23.04

*Source: Census 2001*

According to 2001 census Mayurbhanj houses 30 tribes. The major tribes inhabiting in Mayurbhanj are Santal, Kolha, Bathudi, Bhumij, Munda, Gond, Saunti, Hill Kharia, Mahali and the minor tribes are Mankirdia, Lodha, Kol, Kisan, Baiga, Holva (on numerical strength basis).

**Table 4: Major Tribal population concentration in Eight Blocks**

Name of the Block	Total population	ST population	per cent of ST
Banspal	85133	66829	79.50
Champua	100684	45542	45.21
Harichandanpur	121515	66080	54.38
Joda	103188	62060	60.14
Jhumpura	97726	48208	45.21
Telkoi	86498	44518	51.47
Sadar	136749	67446	49.32
Ghatgaon	102223	63712	62.32

*Source: Census 2001*

Linguistically Austric and the Indo-Aryan language groups are dominated in tribal population of Mayurbhanj. Tribal communities like Santal, Munda, Ho, Hill Kharia, Oraon, Mahali, Kol, Bhumij speak their own language. Rest of the tribal communities of the district are speaking

Oriya and mixture of languages. In Orissa, four tribal communities developed their own script out of which two tribal communities are inhabiting in Mayurbhanj namely Santal and Munda. Santal is the largest tribes of the district scatteredly concentrated all over Mayurbhanj. Their main occupation is agriculture and agricultural labourer. They are very conscious about their identity and culture. Santal is one of the largest and advanced tribes of India too. They developed their own script Olchiki and have been continuing language movement in Eastern India. Mahali is the only tribe well known in Orissa for his bamboo craft making skill.

The Hill Kharia, Birhor (Makirdia) and Lodha are the primitive tribes who deserve special mention in the district. The Kharia and Birhor (Makirdia) are nomadic food-gatherers and hunters concentrated in the hilly area of Similipal in Panchapirha sub-division particularly in Jashipur Block. For their socio-economic development government of Orissa in the year 1987 has established the Hill Kharia and Mankirdia Development Agency at Jashipur. Lodha, another tribal community of Mayurbhanj was labelled as criminal tribe till the revocation of the Criminal Tribes Act, 1962. The livelihood sources of the Lodhas include agriculture, raising silk cocoons, selling fire wood and rope making. Their major concentration is in the Suliapada and Morada Blocks of the district. For their socio-economic development, Government of Orissa in the year 1986 has established Lodha Development Agency which is situated at Morada. The development programmes implemented through Micro-project include soil conservation, horticulture, agriculture, and health services. However, inadequate resource flow to Micro-project affects the quality of services and their adequacy to the community.

For Socio-economic development of tribes of Mayurbhanj four Integrated Tribal

**Table 5: An overview of Tribal Demography in Keonjhar District**

Population in million			Literacy		Female literacy		No. of STs Inhabiting	No. of PTGs Inhabiting	Numerically Major Tribe
Total	ST	per cent of STs	Total	STs	Total	STs			
1.56	0.7	44.5	59.24	40.3	46.22	25.97	25	1	Kolha

**Source:** Tribes in Orissa at a Glance, 2008, SCSTRTI.

Development Agencies are functioning at Baripada, Udala, Karanjia and Rairangapur. The ITDAs as a part of the TSP approach integrated development programmes for the tribal people and whole tribal dominated regions of the district. However, these agencies suffer from various difficulties of staff shortage, lack of adequate fund flow, and functioning of parallel development institutions in these tribal dominated areas. Lack of single line administration and single window fund flow for tribal development in the State has equally affected the tribal development processes in the State.

Politically Mayurbhanj district is having one Lok Sabha seat reserved for Scheduled tribes. Out of nine assembly seats, seven seats are reserved for Scheduled Tribes.

### Keonjhar District Overview

The district of Keonjhar is one of the most backward areas of the State. Situated on the northern part of the State, it is surrounded by Jharkhand in the north, Jajpur district in the South, Dhenkanal and Sundargarh in the West, Mayurbhanj and Bhadrak in the East. The district lies between 35° 11' and 86° 22' longitude and 21° 11' N and 22° 10' N latitudes and situated around 480 feet above the sea level. The district occupies an area of 8303 sq kms out of which about 37.30 per cent of the area i.e. 3100 sq

kms. is covered by forests of northern tropical moist deciduous type. As far as demographic features are concerned disadvantage sections like SCs and STs constitute more than 56 per cent of the total population. The literacy level of the entire district stands at 59.2 per cent and the female literacy rate more particularly tunes to only 46.2 per cent for the entire district. But in case of tribal the literacy rate is mere 24 per cent. The gender gap in education at rural region is 26.6 per cent. Acute poverty is the main reason for illiteracy in rural and tribal areas of the district.

### Tribal Profile of the District

The district has a high percentage of tribal population, which is 44.5 per cent of the total population. There are 25 types of tribes residing in the district. Out of 13 Blocks of Keonjhar district Banspal, Champua, Harichandanpur, Joda, Jhumpura, Keonjhar (Sadar Block), Telkoi and Ghatgaon are tribal dominated Blocks and educationally quite backward. Keonjhar, Telkoi, Champua, and Barbil Tehsils are declared as Scheduled areas of the district.

The literacy rate among the tribal people of the district tunes to 40.3 per cent out of which ST male literacy is 38.01 per cent and ST female literacy rate is 25.97 per cent. This shows that tribal communities still lag behind in comparison to other communities of the district in spite of the

fact that government have been taking various development measures for improving the situation.

Linguistically tribal population of Austric and Mundari language groups are dominated in Keonjhar district, which include various tribal communities like Juang, Munda, Kol and Ho, while Bhuiyan tribal community belongs to Indo-Aryan Language group.

Out of thirteen Blocks of Keonjhar eight Blocks are having large percentage of tribal population. The linguistic map of the district shows that all the Blocks are multilingual in varying degrees. The main tribal communities that co-exist and co-operate with Oriya language are Juang, Santali, Ho and Munda. In the Blocks of Harichandanpur and Keonjhar Sadar Oriya language emerges as the major language. In the Blocks of Champua, Joda, Banspal and Jhumpura, Oriya is used as a subsidiary and a supplementary language with tribal language. In Telkoi Block the tribal like Kissan use local Oriya dialect while Munda and Juang use their respective dialect.

Politically Keonjhar district is having one Lok Sabha seat reserved for Scheduled Tribes. Out of six assembly seats, three seats are reserved for Scheduled Tribes.

Juang is the only primitive tribe mostly concentrated in Banspal, Telkoi and Harichandanpur Blocks. They claim themselves to be the autochthons of the area. They classify themselves into two sections, viz. the Thaniya (those who dwell in their original habitation) and the Bhagudiya (those who have moved away to other places).

The Juangs believe that in ancient times they emerged from earth on the hills of Gonasika where the river Baitarani has its source, not far from the village Honda in Keonjhar. In local

language the word “Juang” means man. In other words, man emerged from the earth at the same place where the river Baitarani emerged. The Juang also refer to themselves as Patra-Savaras (patra means leaf). By this they mean that they are that branch of the Savara tribe whose members used to dress themselves in leaves.

For socio-economic development of tribal people 2 Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) in the district are functioning. They are Keonjhar and Champua.

For Juang socio-economic development Government of Orissa in the year 1978 established Juang Development Agency (JDA) at Gonasika from where the micro project have been operating for a cluster of villages largely inhabited by the Juangs. The development activities of the Micro-project are flowing to a cluster of villages largely inhabited by Juangs. However, insignificant flow of funds to the Micro-project influence the service delivery and quality of development impact on the Juangs.

### Conclusion

The districts of Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar are known for their rich tribal cultural heritage, mining and mineral resources. Due to development interventions in the form of mining activities, we observe certain changes in the life and livelihood of the Santals and the Bhuiyans in few pockets. These changes are observed in the literacy status, educational achievements and their employment status. But, by and large the benefits of development programmes are yet to reach the tribal population in general. Many time questions are raised but whether the pattern of development so far adopted are in accordance with the tribal people, their cultural need and livelihood requirements? Whether the State over the time have given adequate attention for the welfare of the tribal communities at large? Much lately the

State has recognised the importance of tribal language in the education and development processes of these people. The State needs to understand the linkages between the development activities, livelihood requirements and natural resource base of the tribal communities and the development of these regions. Perhaps these processes have started and need to be strengthened in coming days if adequate resources are converged into the development processes of these districts.

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*Hon'ble Speaker of O.L.A Shri Pradip Kumar Amat presenting a memento to Hon'ble Speaker, Chhatisgarh Shri Dharam Lal Kaushik at Orissa Legislative Assembly premises on 04.04.2011.*