

THE LIFE AND PROSPECT OF TRIBAL POPULATIONS IN RAJGANGPUR AND KUTRA BLOCKS OF SUNDARGARH DISTRICT

Dr. M.G Bage*

Introduction:

In India there are 67.7 million people belonging to "Scheduled Tribes", they are generally considered to be 'Adivasis', literally meaning 'indigenous people' or 'original inhabitants', though the term 'Scheduled Tribes' (STs) is not coterminous (*having common boundary*) with the term 'Adivasis'. Scheduled Tribes is an administrative term used for purposes of 'administering' certain specific constitutional privileges, protection and benefits for specific sections of peoples considered historically disadvantaged and 'backward'. In India total 5,653 distinct communities are identified, 6, 35 are considered to be 'tribes' or 'Adivasis'. In comparison to it one may find that the estimated number of STs varies from 250 to 593. For the special recognition every practical purpose, the United Nations and multilateral agencies generally considered the STs as 'indigenous peoples'. With the ST population making up 8.08% (as of 1991) of the total population of India, it is the nation with the highest concentration of 'Tribal peoples' in the world!

Objectives:

- To explore changing life of tribal in the developmental age.
- To know the tribal dependency on livelihood resources.
- To understand the tribal populations status and its consequences.
- To know the impact of development projects in the tribal pockets.

* **P.G Department of Sociology, Utkal University, Joachim Dung dung, Ph. D Scholar**

Looking back to history, the Adivasis were in effect self-governing 'first nations'. In general and in most parts of the pre-colonial period, they were practically part of the 'unknown frontier' of the respective states where the rule of the reign in fact did not extend, and the Adivasi governed themselves outside of the influence of the particular ruler. In fact of similarity aspect, all tribal communities are not alike. They are products of different historical and social conditions. They belong to four different language families, and several different racial stocks and religious moulds.

"A tribe is a group of people in a primitive or barbarous stage of development acknowledging the authority of a chief and usually regarding them as having a common ancestor. (Oxford Dictionary)

Tribe as a social group with territorial affiliation, endogamous with no specialization of functions ruled by tribal officers hereditary or otherwise, united in language or dialect recognizing social distance with other tribes or castes. According to Ralph Linton tribe is a group of 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 interests. (D.N Majumdar)

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.

“A tribe is a collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying or possessing to occupy a common territory and is usually not endogamous, though originally it might have been so”. (Imperial Gazette of India)

Types of tribes: In Odisha, there are 62 types of tribes are officially recognized by the Government of Odisha by different criterion, and the Sundargarh district is having 40 types of tribes living in different corner, but only few recognized tribes are commonly seen within the district and they are popularly known as advanced Adivasi. The major tribes of Sundargarh district are Gond, Bhuyan, Kishan, Oraon, Munda and Kharia. In comparison to other tribes of the district, they are advanced to some extent in education, employment, civilization and in other social sectors.

The following Scheduled Tribes are seen in the Sundargarh district. Bagata, Banjara or Banjari, Bathudi, Bhattaa or Dhotada, Bhuiyan or Bhuyan, Bhumia, Bhumij, Binjhal, Binjhia, Dal, Dharua, Gadaba, Gond or Gondo, Ho, Holva, Kawar, Kharia or Kharian, Kharwar, Khond, Kond or Kandha, Kisan, Kolha, Koli including Malhar, Kondadora, Kora, Korua, Lodha, Madia, Mahali, Mankidi, Mirdhas, Munda, Munda-Lohara, Munda-Mahali, Mundari, Oraon, Paroja, Rajuar, Santal, Saora, Savar, Saura or Sahara, Shabar or Lodha, Sounti, and Tharua. Within the Kutra and Rajgangpur Block following tribes numbers is more, they are Oraon, Munda, Kharia, Kisan, Bhuiyan, Gond etc.

The tribes of Kutra and Rajgangpur are popularly known as Khunt Kati (in Sadri version). It means the original forest clearer, made cultivable land for survival. Though they are real forest clearer, they occupy land right, water and forest. In the initial period the tribes did not have the settled cultivation; rather they professed shifting cultivation till the land fertility exists. The nature of tribal migration slowed down and they occupied settled cultivation. From the beginning, tribal depended on land and forest based economy. Cultivation of paddy, cereal, pulses and other kinds of cash crops like (red gram) rahar, black gram, horse gram etc are primarily considered as a tribal economy of the Kutra and Rajgangpur blocks. Similarly barter system among the tribes of particular communities is a parts of economy by which they could share & exchange their crops among themselves. Besides these, creating of personal orchard in their homestead land was another occupation that's supplements their livelihood. Following fruit bearing tree were planted in their homestead land such as mango, guava, lemon, orange, jack fruit, papaya, black berry etc. almost all the tribes of Kutra and Rajgangpur blocks were enjoying comfortable and peaceful life within the community. Their community life was something

different from present civil and modern society. Sense of belongingness, we feeling, community integrity were another significant phenomenon of tribal. The same integrity of we feeling and belongingness are currently breaking down by the different divide and rules policies and political interferences. In the present context the feeling of oneness among the tribes is rarely felt in semi-urban of these two blocks areas even in the rural tribal communities of district after the advent of industrialization and impact of Globalization.

Demography/ Population at glance:

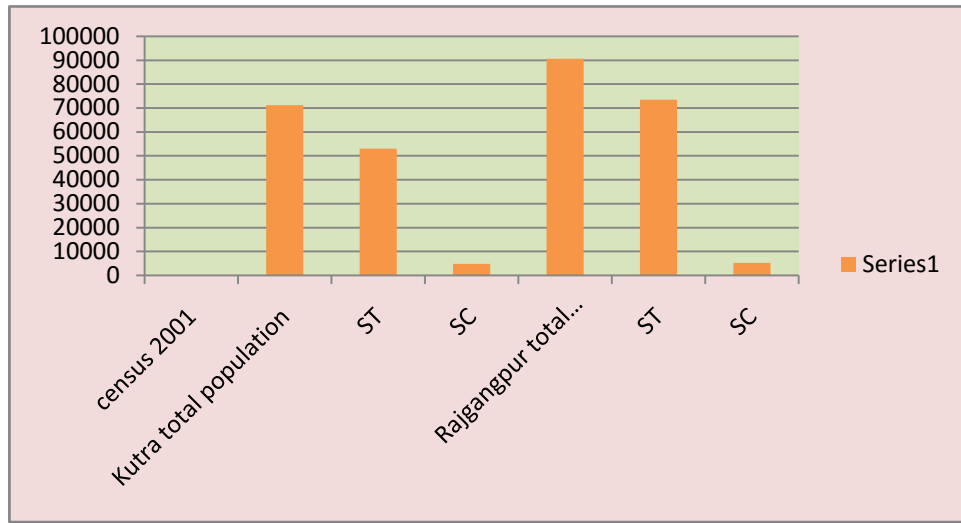
As per the census 2011, the total population of India is 121,01, 93,422, and in Odisha total population is 41,94,7,358 out of this 21,20,1,678 are male and 20,74,5,680 are female which constitute 3.47% of national population. In 2011 census, Sundargarh population is 2,080,664 of which male number is 10, 55,723 and female number is 1,024,941 respectively. There was change of 13.66 percent in the population compared to population as per 2001.

Average literacy rate of Sundargarh in 2011 census is 74.13 compared to 64.86 in 2001. If things are looked out at gender wise, male and female literacy were 82.13 and 65.93 respectively.

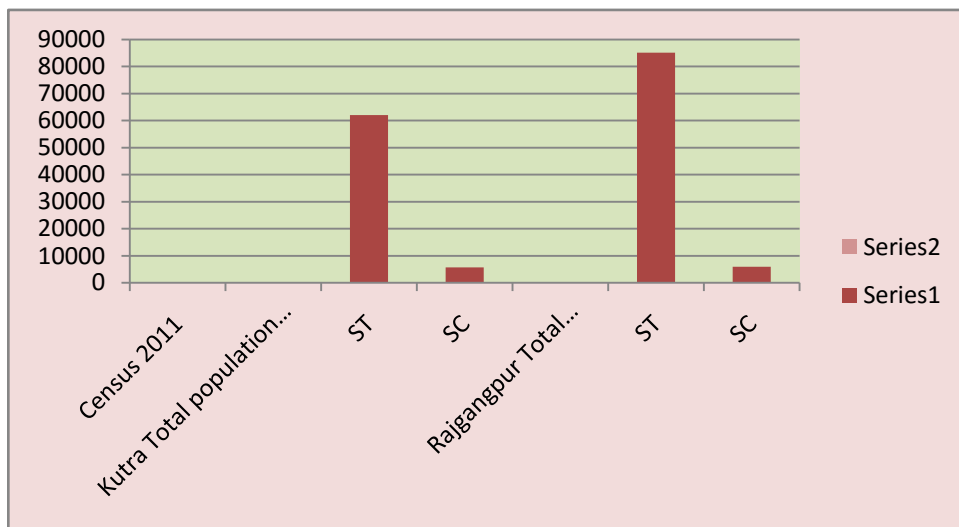
With regards to Sex Ratio in Sundargarh, it is stood at 971 per 1000 male compared to 2001 census figure of 957. The average national sex ratio in India is 940 as per latest reports of Census 2011 Directorate.

The Child Sex Ratio as per census 2011 is 937 compared to 970 of census 2001. In 2011, Children under 0-6 formed 11.97 percent of Sundargarh District compared to 14.47 percent of 2001. There was net change of -2.5 percent in this compared to previous census of India.

According to 2001 census in the study universe of Kutra and Rajgangpur Blocks the total population were 2, 24,281. The scheduled tribes were 1, 80,178 which constituted 65.69%. And the scheduled castes were 16,887. If it is classified then in Kutra Block total population was 71,152, ST-52,993 and SC-4867. Other hand the total population of Rajgangpur block was 90,692, ST-73,483 and SC-5212 excluding the Municipal area.



In 2011 census the total number of population in Kutra Block is 80,470. Out of which 62,040 are scheduled tribe and scheduled caste is 5731. The literacy number is 48411. Among the total population 19318 are marginal workers, 5764 are cultivators and 10,071 are the agricultural labors. In the same way in 2011 census the total population Rajgangpur is 105,665. Out of which Scheduled tribes are 85,116 and Scheduled Caste population is 5939, the literacy number is 60101. Among the total population the marginal workers are 19341, the cultivators are 3209 and agricultural labors are 10,026.



District at a glance: The Sundargarh was the capital of princely state of Gangpur till 1948 and became the district head quarter of Sundargarh from 1948. It is understood that in ancient times, Sundargarh was under the rules of south Kosala. However divergent views are available regarding the origin of ruling family. This ex-state was under the suzerainty of Sambalpur which formed part of the dominion of the Maratha Rajas of Nagpur. This gave up right to the British Government in 1803 by the Maratha Chief Raghuji Bhonsla of Nagpur under the treaty of Deogaon (near Rourkela). But this was restored to him by special engagement in 1806. This was finally ceded in 1826. In 1905 this princely state along with Bonai was transferred from the control of the commissioner of Chhota Nagpur to that of Odisha division separate political agent was appointed.

Panchayats Samittees in the district: The Sundargarh district is consist of seventeen blocks and tehsils offices. They are Balisankara, Badgaon, Bisra, Bonaigarh, Gurundia, Hemgir, Koira, Kuarmunda, Kutra, Lahunipara, Lathikata, Lephripara, Nuagaon, Rajgangpur, Sundargarh sadar, Subdega and Tangarpali, Among the seventeen blocks the Kuarmunda, Rajgangpur, Kutra and Lathikata block are developed by industries and mines. Besides these the district itself is developing in its transport communication infrastructure sector.

There are total 28 nos Gram Panchayats both in Rajgangpur and Kutra Blocks. The Kutra Block is consist of 16 gram panchayats that are Katang, Gangajal, Gyanpali, Jharbera, Khatkurbahal, Kiringsera, Biringatoli, Amgova, Kendaimunda, Kutra, Nuagaon, Panchora, Rajabasha, Tarkera, Tunmura, and Purkapali. Similarly The Rajgangpur Block is consist of 12 (twelve) Gram Panchayats they are Panposh, Laing, Malidih, Kutunia, Kunmuru, Kukuda, Kesramal, Jaraikela, Chungimati, Budham, Buchukupada, and Alanda. Though the Kutra Block is Panchayat wise numerically more than the Rajgangpur Block, its population is lesser than Rajgangpur block.

The Tribe and development projects: Abject poverty and ruthless exploitation have been the plight of tribal everywhere and the Indian tribal are no exception. Ironically the regions where our tribal people live in are some of the richest in terms of natural bounties. They not only hold vast forest wealth but also contain endless deposits of minerals. After independence numerous measures were taken to exploit them for raw materials and large mines and industrial projects.

Rourkela, Bhilai, Ranchi, Bailadella, Hirakud, etc. are some of the milestones on the economic and industrial map of modern India. Odisha Cement Limited Rajgangpur and Utkal Machinery Limited Kansbahal are other milestones on the economic and industrial map of Rajgangpur Block. The natural corollary/outcome of this development should have been the economic development of the concerned tribal population. But this did not happen. They are deprived of their lands under statutory conditions and were paid meager amount in cash as compensation which they frittered away in drinking and celebrating tribal rituals. Most of them became landless and moneyless in the process.

Tribal economic organizations: The living standard of tribal within the Kutra and Rajgangpur blocks area are meager. Many tribals are still living Below Poverty Line. The majority of tribal are still depending on land and vegetables cultivation. Few tribals surviving by depending on selling fuel wood, vegetable business, and daily labour (males and females). The youths have migrated to the neighbouring states in search of jobs due to poor family economic condition. The migrated male youths are doing daily labour in different crusher, agricultural land. The land cultivation is still done in a traditional pattern among the tribal. The modern agricultural technologies are not implemented by the tribal due to poverty. Once arable crops cultivated in the Kutra and in some parts of Rajgangpur block areas due to lack of irrigation facilities. Expansion of state highway compensated good amount of compensation to the land loser which encouraged them to have business.

Natural and mineral resources available:

Land includes benefits to arise out of land, and things attached to the earth or permanently fastened to any thing attached to the earth "**Tribal land**" means any land or interests in land owned by a tribe or tribes. Nature is an inseparable of the tribe of universe. The concept of nature has given the tribes their sense of attachment to land. Land for tribe is not just a patch or piece of earth, to be individually owned and cultivated. It is the extended reality of mother earth that has given them birth and land. Land does not give them just food, but also shelter, social life and over and above, the privilege of being human. The tribe therefore, traditionally owned individual pieces of land. Land for them is a gift of God, to be shared equally by all. Permanent ownership of land is not against of any caste philosophy and understanding. Land ownership is a means of

deriving their livelihood. Sacrifices are offered before commencing the agriculture work, is called Sarna-Puja. Appropriate sacrifices activate the components responsible for a good harvest, i.e. soil moisture, soil temperature, rain, fertility of soil etc. Agriculture is a holy activity of tribal in Sundargarh district. It is an activity through which one has to be communion with mother earth, who has created the living organism and sustains them, which must be carried on with utmost sincerity and earnestness.

Tribal does not grow high yielding varieties of crops that depend on water irrigation. The traditional crops which they grow by settled cultivation methods can make do with natural seasonal rain. They use water from the dug well and stream available in their localities for domestic and other purposes. Traditional water sources are being improved and the people in some places are learning to make use of nala water resources. The development of irrigation is a recent phenomenon in Kutra and Rajgangpur. The government is providing pumps set and well and cash loan to dig wells and renovate old tanks. The rivers water a resource on which some of the tribal community depends is now used for the urban.

Tribal life is concentrated around the forest, which is their greatest economic asset. In the past as well as at present in its social aspect the forest was/is their habitat a symbol of their freedom of movement, both in groups and individuals. Similarly religious activities were regularly performed in the forest. Fruits, jangle roots, mushrooms, leaves, shoots, flower, and honey are collected from the forest. The forest provides most of the herbal remedies in the form of barks, roots, leaves, flowers and fruits, materials etc. for house construction like timber, bamboo, grass creeper for rope making and thatching, leaves for making plates and bowls, reeds for weaving mates and the split bamboo for plaiting cots.

Both the Rajgangpur and Kutra block are enormous deposited with mineral resources. Basically limestone and dolomite mineral resources are available in the area which encouraged industrialists to set up mines in the following regions, consequences of which Tata Iron and Steel Company and OCL have two large scales of limestone and dolomite mines operating since 1956.

Environmental scenario and hope to survive:

If a living being wants to survive in the universe, then he/she has to find out the ventilation of fresh air and pollution free environment that could provide him/her for better life and more life expectancy. In the Rajgangpur Block approximately more than 06 sponge iron factories has been established, within five to eight years. It is clearly observed in the surroundings of Rajgangpur, Madiakudar, Kalunga, Birmitrapur, and Kuarmunda area are extremely polluted and turned up on serious mode of the environment. In the same way in Kutra block there are one sponge iron, three mini cement plant and three limestone and dolomite mines operated that has acquired large amount of cultivable land. Like mushroom the establishment of industries are taking place and the people living in the environment are suffering from different diseases like T.B., Asthma, silicosis, gastric etc. there is a large scale and few mini cement plants has been established, and resulting environment pollution. Within the Sundargarh district there are total 46 nos. of sponge iron factories have been established. The used rejected charcoal is dumped besides the road and making small heaps, that results decreasing of soil fertility for cultivable land. The disposal of waste and chemical gas is released in open sky at night that directly impact on cultivable land as well as on environment.

Day was there, tribals were master [owner] of land in these two blocks of the Sundargarh district. At present they lost major part of their land by various projects. In recent years tribal land alienation has been identified as one of the major factors of tribal unrest in Rajgangpur and Kutra blocks of Sundargarh district. Land being the principal asset and prime source of livelihood deprived by way of transfer, sale, and mortgaging, etc. and also acquisition by Government and private enterprises for developmental purpose has caused great resentment among them. There are laws to protect tribal land alienation, but unable to control, rather it increases. In the present scenario maximum tribal land is in the hands of non-tribal who migrated to this region. The Sundargarh district is rich in its mineral resources in the state of Odisha and also active inning of Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG). Sundargarh is also part of Special Economic Zone (SEZ) because of its mineral deposits. Within the Rajgangpur and Kutra Block there are total eleven mines and factories are actively operating in 4938.34 acres of land.

Availability of safe-guard Legislations and its Functions: After independence of nation, several legislations came into force to protect tribal land right, in Scheduled districts such as Sundargarh, Mayurbhanj, Kandhamal, undivided Koraput (Raigada, Malkangiri and Nabarangpur) districts of Odisha. The legislation like Odisha land reform Act-1956, the land Acquisition Act-1894, the Odisha Schedule area transfer of immovable property (by Scheduled Tribes) Regulation 1956, the Odisha Schedule area transfer of immovable property (by Scheduled Tribes) Rules-1959, Provision of Panchayat Extension in Scheduled Area Act-1996, and regulation of II of 1956. Besides these, the function of Tribe Advisory Council (TAC) in the state level under the Chairmanship of the Hon-Chief Minister of the state and other tribal elected representatives of the state are primarily responsible to protect tribal land for the sake of tribal interest of the scheduled districts in the state.

According to regulation II of 1956, in the schedule districts the immovable properties (land) of tribals cannot be transferred to non-tribal or to any tribal or other industrialist for any purposes if he possesses less than five acres of non-irrigated land and two and half acres of irrigated land. The legislations should be critically analyzed by the honorable government, policy makers and bureaucrats. There is need to have proper execution and monitoring of all the safe-guard legislations.

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