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Socio-Economic life style of the Ho tribe: A Case Study in Mayurbhanj District of Odisha

Abstract:

This paper established the Socio-economic life style of the Ho tribe. Their main occupation is agricultural activities and their economic activities are agriculture, animal husbandry, forest resources, handcraft and handloom and seasonal migrations. The data was collected from 60 respondents in the Mayurbhanj district of Odisha. Primary data were gathered through personal interviews, observations, and indirect methods, including informal discussions with government employees (BDO, WEO, and CDPO), NGO functionaries, bank officials, news reporters, social workers, and other government published documents. This indicates that the tribal people continue to live in an outdated state in the Mayurbhanj district of Odisha, and they are falling behind the general population in terms of social, political, economic, and technological status.

Keywords: Culture, Development, Empowerment, Ho Tribe, Socio-Economic,

Introduction

The Ho people are an Austroasiatic Munda ethnic group mostly found in northern Odisha and the Kolhan district of Jharkhand. They are belonging to the Proto-Australoid group. The name "Ho" finds its primary connotation in "Horo," signifying people. Anthropologists have traced the roots of the Ho tribe to the Kol and Kolha communities, classified within the Caucasian group. The Ho language is a part of the proto-Munda language, was symbolically used in daily household objects. The genealogy of the Ho people is linked to the Munda community, and they are referred to as 'Kolha' in Odisha and 'Ho' in Jharkhand. The native home of the Ho is Kolhan in Jharkhand, and over time, they have migrated across neighbouring states.

British integration in the Ho socio-economic organizations was not only invasive and all-pervasive but also significantly impacted their interpersonal relationships and livelihood patterns, ultimately leading to the disintegration of the village community itself. The British policy towards the Hos was characterized by protectionism and isolation, aimed at civilizing what they perceived as the 'wild' and unruly Hos, encouraging them to abandon their traditional 'predatory' way of life. Following Wilkinson's Rule of 1833, the British implemented a policy of direct rule in Kolhan, first under a South Western Frontier Political Agent, then under the Commissioner of

8 Chota Nagpur and the Deputy Commissioner of Singhbhum. Although claiming to be non-interfering, the new rulers incorporated traditional leadership into the British administrative framework, redefining their roles and relationships within the village community. While the communal structure of the village remained seemingly unchanged, subtle yet crucial changes occurred beneath the surface. Simultaneously, the village found itself entangled in an increasingly intricate network of external relationships.

33 Hence, British rule not only permeated the internal domain of the tribal social organization, causing significant changes in the village social structure and the application of new legal definitions, but it also had a profound impact on the Ho economy. Two noteworthy economic transformations deeply influenced the lives of the Ho village community. Firstly, there was a shift from the traditional shifting cultivation in the less-fertile, forested upland areas to settled cultivation, prompted by the substantial population increase in Singhbhum during the 19th century. The British administration actively supported this shift, deeming swidden cultivation wasteful. Secondly, a crucial development in Kolhan was linked to forest preservation. Towards the late 19th century, Forest Laws restricted access to large parts of the forest for villagers. Traditionally, the Ho economic structure involved significant overlap between the village and the forest, with dependence on local forest produce and the spoils of the hunt complementing agricultural production.

As the forests became off-limits during colonial rule, the Ho economy, once diversified, contracted and became more reliant on agricultural production. Despite this, an expansion of cultivation in Kolhan, coupled with low rentals, the establishment of the Bengal-Nagpur Railway tracks, and new economic opportunities, drew outsiders into Kolhan from the mid-19th century onward. Previously avoiding the region due to political instability, these newcomers, derogatorily referred to as Dikus, increasingly exerted influence over the Ho people, often displacing them from their lands. The control of Khuntkatti groups over cultivation organization gradually waned. The term "Dikus" encompassed not only exploitative outsiders but also many older service castes transformed into oppressors under colonial rule. Originally providers of essential services to the village community, these castes, in changed circumstances, became adversaries of the Hos. Under British rule, "diku" gained a legal meaning, serving as a revenue category for non-tribal tenants. The influx of outsiders deepened the divide between village

leadership and ordinary Ho raiyats. Some Mankis and Mundas actively settled Dikus in their villages, often in defiance of the district administration, which wrongly attributed the influx to the traditional leaders rather than recognizing the changes introduced by colonial rule. The paradox lay in the resentment towards Dikus, who were simultaneously deemed essential for the economy of Kolhan.

The dynamics of the traditional leadership's interactions with the other members of the village community underwent a discernible change. The Mankis and Mundas, who were once considered equals, became government employees who answered to the British administration and reliant on their favour for the continuation of their roles, rather than communal approval, as per tradition. In the early days of British rule, some Mankis and Mundas attempted resistance through a silent disregard of their new duties. However, over time, a system of reward and punishment effectively co-opted the traditional leadership into the British administration, leading to instances where Mankis went against the community's wishes to appease colonial superiors. The penetration of the colonial bureaucracy into Kolhan inevitably left its mark on tribal institutions, altering their character and distorting the roles of key functionaries in the tribal world. The decline in communal solidarity became evident in the interactions of ordinary Ho villagers with their leaders, showcasing an increasing distance. By the end of the period, a segment of the Mankis and Mundas had lost credibility in the eyes of the people.

The Ho tribe, a major community in Odisha belonging to the Proto-Austroloid group, derives its name from 'horo,' signifying 'man' or people. Descendants of the Munda family, are also recognized as 'Kolha' in Odisha and Ho in the state of Jharkhand. Originating in Kolhan of Jharkhand, the Ho people have expanded into neighboring regions, including Odisha, and West Bengal, and even reaching Assam. Anthropologists classify the Ho as Caucasian, distinguishing them from most other Indian groups (Basa, K. K. 1992: 79-106). Primarily residing in the forested Chota Nagpur plateau of Southern Bihar, Ho groups are also found in Northern Odisha, parts of West Bengal, and neighboring countries like Bangladesh and Nepal. The term 'Ho' signifies 'man,' emphasizing their status as indigenous people of India. Despite challenges, the Ho tribe is progressing economically and socially through various government schemes. Speaking the proto-Munda language, the Ho preserve remnants of Munda culture, with linguistic links to Indo-Aryan languages. In 2001, there were about 700,000 Ho people living in Jharkhand,

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16 making them the fourth most numerous scheduled tribes in the state. Their population extends to West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, and Bihar, totaling 1,033,095 according to the 2011 Census, with the majority in Jharkhand (928,289), Then Odisha (80,608), West Bengal (23,483), and Bihar (715).

The “Ho” Family Structure

The Ho community exhibits a unique social structure with matrilineal, patrilocal, and patriarchal family dynamics. The father serves as the family head, managing affairs in consultation with the grown-up members, and properties are inherited by sons according to the rule of primogeniture. Grown-up boys and girls actively contribute to domestic and outdoor tasks, emphasizing the significant role of mothers in domestic activities. Ho villages are considered basic social units, where different clans extend mutual help and cooperation in various socio-religious and economic activities. The Ho society adheres to prescribed rules and regulations at tribal, inter-tribal, and village clan levels, maintaining simplicity, amiability, and philanthropic qualities.

The Ho people, numbering approximately 700,000 in Jharkhand in 2001, are the state’s fourth most numerous scheduled tribe. Their territory extends to neighboring states, with a total population of 1,033,095 according to the 2011 Census. Physically, the Ho are of short to medium stature with dark complexions, wide, flat noses; dark brown eyes; straight or wavy black hair; thin chins. Despite lacking solid and muscular body features, they exhibit sharp intelligence and courage in their daily lifestyle.

The Ho society is divided into two matrilineal clans known as "killi," each with a totemic association, and marriage inside the clan is absolutely prohibited. The clan members maintain a strong sense of reciprocity and cooperation, treating each other as brothers and sisters. Agriculture is the mainstay of their livelihood, supplemented by food gathering, seasonal forest collections, hunting, and fishing. They engage in socio-economic activities based on mutual help and cooperation, selling surplus items in local markets.

While nearly one-third of the Ho practice Hindu rituals, they consider themselves a separate tribe. Their eating habits are predominantly non-vegetarian, and they primarily speak Hindi and Odia. The Ho worship several Gods and Goddesses connected to nature and have a strong belief in religion, spirits, and supernatural abilities. The supreme deity, Singhbonga or the sun God is revered for rain, crops, and life necessities. Agricultural activities are associated with traditional

celebrations, and the Ho have a complex political system with corresponding offices for social control.

Child rearing in the Ho community emphasizes the significant role of fathers, with the belief that a child is Singbonga's gift. The Ho strongly forbid marriage inside the clan and observe clan exogamy and tribe endogamy. They attribute deaths not only to old age or illness, but also to dark magic and demonic spirits. Each clan has a designated burial site, and the Ho bury and cremate their deceased. They believe in Bongaism, considering power and spirit as non-anthropomorphic entities. The Dehuri or Deuri acts as a religious head, mediating between the Ho and Bongas, offering rituals and sacrifices during festivals. Desauli, a village deity, holds cultural significance in Jharkhand, and local officials used investigations of Khuntikatti rights to determine village founders between 1913 and 1918, applying Desauli as a test.

Village Structure

The Ho community's claim to Khuntkatti rights is contingent on their ability to demonstrate the presence of Desauli, according to Jharkhand: TRTC (2002,40). Following their custom, a section of the jungle is designated as the dwelling of the village god by the original Ho settlers. This designated area, known as Jahira, serves as the abode of Desauli, believed to be the protector of the village and the well-being of its residents. The study of this indigenous practice unveils not only Ho's religious traditions but also delves into their secular traits. In certain Ho-dominated villages, the residents invoke the services of Pouri for their welfare and protection from mundane concerns (Roy Choudhury, P.C. 1958). Despite expectations of Ho villagers worshiping their deities, some villages see the Hos worshiping 'Pouri,' a village God. This choice suggests the Ho's trust in this non-tribal deity for protection, and they exclusively worship this village God.

The customs related to birth, marriage, and death hold significant importance in Ho culture. Regarding death, the Ho employs various sizes of memorial stones to cover the burial place or the mortal remains. The *sasan* or graveyard for their ancestors in the village features burial stones arranged either horizontally (*biddiri*) or vertically (*sasandiri*). The graves and memorial stones are indicative of the Ho's permanent settlement in these villages. Notably, the Ho place the corpse in a north-south direction during burial, believing it symbolizes the soul's journey towards the south. This practice aligns with their belief that the soul travels to Singbonga's place through the southern direction. Similarly, if a person is cremated with their head pointing

towards the south, it is believed their soul will easily reach Singhbonga's place (Sen, A.K., 2011, and Majumdar, D.N. 1950).

Tribal of India

India is a country that exemplifies unity in diversity, with a plethora of languages, religions, castes, traditions, cuisines, and geographical distinctions contributing to a harmonious sense of unity. Comprising 28 states and 8 union territories, the nation is abundant in diverse natural and human resources. India is notably characterized as a tribal-dominated state, with numerous tribes residing in various states. According to the 2011 census, a substantial 10.42 crore people belong to tribal groups, despite making up only 8.6% of the nation's total population.

Tribe of Odisha

Among the 28 states and 8 union territories in India, Odisha stands as a prominent state, having achieved recognition as a separate entity since 1936, and is predominantly inhabited by Odia-speaking people who use Oriya as their regional language. Odisha is characterized by a diverse population, including various tribal communities, alongside people from different walks of life. Since the nation's independence, the state has identified 62 tribal groups, with a significant portion residing in its districts. Out of the total population of Odisha, which is 9590756 people, 8994967 live in rural areas, while 595789 reside in urban areas. 22.8% of Odisha's population is tribal, according to the 2011 census, while Mayurbhanj is one of the state's most tribal districts, with 58.72% of its residents being indigenous.

Nipania: Study village of Thakurmunda Block

Nipania, located in the Thakurmunda block in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district, is one of the 173 villages in this block. The village is identified with the code 389018 in the administrative records and encompasses 59 houses. According to the Census of 2011, Nipania has a population of 295, comprising 141 males and 154 females. There are 45 children between the ages of 0 and 6 living there, 24 of whom are boys and 21 of whom are girls. The village exhibits a literacy rate of 38%, with 114 out of the total 295 inhabitants being literate. The literacy rate among males is 56%, with 79 out of 141 being educated, while the female literacy rate is 22%, with 35 out of 154 females being literate. Unfortunately, Nipania faces a significant challenge in terms of high

illiteracy, standing at 61%. Out of the total population, 181 individuals are illiterate, and the male illiteracy rate is 43%, with 62 out of 141 males being uneducated. The female illiteracy rate is notably higher at 77%, with 119 out of 154 females lacking formal education in this village.

Mayurbhanj District Background

Before independence, Mayurbhanj functioned as a princely state that has been dominated by the Mayurs and Bhanjas for more than a millennium, dating back to the ninth century A.D. The State's integration into the date of the Indian Union was November 9, 1948, following the signing of the Instrument of Merger. This event marked the conclusion of its feudal era, and in January 1949, Mayurbhanj became a district, being the final feudal state that Odisha annexed.

Mayurbhanj stands out in various aspects. This border district in northern Odisha is dominated by tribes and has a thriving culture and rich traditions. Mayurbhanj is the birthplace of the well-known tribal dance form, Chhau. The Similipal forest within the district is celebrated for its biodiversity and natural beauty. Additionally, the honor of being the largest district in Odisha belongs to Mayurbhanj.

Geographical Location

The district of Mayurbhanj covers an expansive area of 10,418 square kilometers or 1,042 thousand hectares, constituting 6.69 percent of the total land mass of Odisha. It is the largest of the state's thirty districts, spanning from 21° to 23°N latitude and 85° 40'E to 87° 11'E longitude. Positioned on the geographical map, Jharkhand and West Bengal abut Mayurbhanj on the north, Keonjhar and Balasore districts of Odisha on the south, West Bengal and Balasore district on the east, and Keonjhar district and the state of Jharkhand on the west.

Topography of the District

Three different geographical formations can be seen in the district. The plains are essentially divided into the eastern and western plains by the hills and lower elevations that go from north to south in the middle regions. The subdivisions of Kaptipada and Baripada are situated on the northern side, while the Bamanghaty sub-divisions and Panchapir subdivisions are located in the southern part.

Statement of the Problems

7 The condition of tribes is profoundly influenced by life and livelihood factors. The tribal culture is intricately connected with the natural environment, and they find comfort in forest surroundings that provide essential resources for their daily needs. In addition to employing roots, leaves, flowers, plants, grass, fruits, nuts, berries, mushrooms, and silk moth cocoons for food, trade, or medicine, they are also heavily dependent on the forest. While rice remains a significant agricultural crop, with the fermentation process utilized for beer production, the advent of modern agriculture, provision of irrigation facilities, input assistance, and market support has brought notable changes to their agricultural practices.

In response to these changes, the younger generations among the tribes have engaged in occupational diversification, finding employment in mining, industries, and civil construction works as wage earners. Mayurbhanj district in Odisha, rich in mineral deposits and forest resources, has seen such economic shifts. Some tribal members have ventured into institutional services and other sectors. Despite involvement in various agricultural activities, the economic life of the Ho tribes is yet to stabilize, and they face various socio-economic challenges. There is an ongoing transition towards settled agriculture, raising questions about the improvement of literacy rates and the availability of permanent employment opportunities in the government sector for the Ho tribes.

Review of Literature

1 **1.Majumdar (1950)** has said that the most of the Hos' evil (Bongas) are not their own and appear to have originated from some Hindu comparable deities that are present in the nearby Odia. Perhaps the ghost who watches over the tanks and ponds is called the Devi Nai Bhagawati of the Odia, and the Gara Satamai of Ho is none other. The stepmother, Sat-ma, and the river deity, Nagebonga, are known by their nasty name, satamai. At the time of analysing the (Kar-bongako) like, (Sunikar), (Rahu kar), (Dindakar) and (Chuharkar), he argued that "Kar is not a Ho word, it is the same word as Kal, the destroyer, and is associated with 'time'. The word Kali that signifies the goddess of that name in popular Hinduism is derived from Kal. (Sunikar), (Rahu kar) are none other than the planets Sani (saturn) and Rahu, known to the Hindus as Kal. The word Chandi (Another name for Kali) is taken from the Hindus, particularly the Oriyas. For example, Bisai Chandi (poisonous), (Ranga Chandi) (blood thirty or red), Chinta Dain and Kaltud (a corruption of Kalketu), (Jugini-bonga) is none other than (Jugini), who with her counterpart

(Dakini) is said to accompany Kali or Chandi" (Majumdar 1950:255-256). Majumdar's statement makes it very evident that the majority of the gods that the Hos worship throughout the many festivals are borrowed from their neighboring Hindus rather than being their own. A lengthy process of incorporating a number of deities from the majority Hindu neighbors and adapting the original names to the tribal vocabulary pattern is evident.

2.Das Gupta (1978) observed the Ho belief in Dian, attributing it to cultural contact with Hindu practices. The Deonwas cult, associated with Bongas and indigenous rituals performed through Dehuri, reflects the cultural dynamics influenced by neighboring communities.

3.Anderson and Gordon (2005) extensively delved into the Munda language, which also reflects the cultural life of the 'Ho' tribe. Over a million individuals in Eastern India speak the Munda language "Ho." and efforts are being made to document and digitize it through projects like the Ho Talking Dictionary.

4.Hebbar (2005) has offered an alternative approach to the problem of women's land rights that departs from the impasse created by the arguments covered in the preceding section. By using a case study to describe daily life, work, and ritual in a Ho hamlet, the goal was to argue for women's rights on land. The goal was to demonstrate how women contribute to the preservation of knowledge systems and lifestyles, which fosters a more respectful interaction with the natural world. The alternative that the movement so loudly defends and praises is shaped in part by the labor that women do on the land and in the forests. However, neither the significance of women's contributions nor the repercussions of their actions are sufficiently acknowledged in the discussion of land rights for Ho women. The undervaluation of women's abilities on land and in woods is the basis for denying them land rights. The customs around land and forests, which serve as the foundation for homecoming in the forest and the main focal point of the Jharkhand movement, are obviously undermined by this. Therefore, it is impossible to assert self-rule or restore the movement's claim of having a more equitable and modest connection with nature than the contemporary, scientific one without first recognizing the part that women played in its construction.

5.Anderson and Gordon (2005) extensively delved into the Munda language, which also reflects the cultural life of the 'Ho' tribe. In Eastern India, more than a million people speak the Munda language "Ho." and efforts are being made to document and digitize it through projects like the Ho Talking Dictionary.

6.Harrison (2007) has contributed to the development of an online 'Ho' English dictionary, aiming to assist people in understanding the meaning of words used by the 'Ho' community. The Ho language, written in

the Warangchiti script, faces challenges in digital representation, and ongoing efforts are being made to overcome these limitations⁷. **Patnaik (2008)** highlighted the physical traits of the Ho people, describing them as short-statured, dark-complexioned individuals with specific features resembling the Negroid group. Their concentration in the Mayurbhanj district is noted. **8. Ota and Mohanty (2011)** observed that the Ho tribe is Kolarian and shares ancestry with the Munda, Kol, and Kol-Lohara. The word “Ho” is most likely derived from the word “horo,” which means “man” in their language. The word may have other forms, such as koro, kolo, etc. Typically, the Ho reside in distinct hamlets inside multiethnic communities. The community is scattered with large tombstones honoring the forefathers. Additional landmarks of a typical Ho hamlet are Sarna, the sacred grove for significant village deities at the outskirts, and Akhala, the dancing arena in the village center. The kitchen is a hallowed space where their ancestors’ seat is located. Women are famous for getting tattoos. They are separated into a number of exogamous groups, including the Killi totemic clan. They adhere to the local exogamy regulation, which governs the kinds of marriages. Andi and its modern variant, dikuandi negotiated marriages, are typical among them. In addition, they obtain partners through encroachment, elopement, and capture. Cross-cousin marriage is preferred by them. The Ho typically bury those who die an unnatural death and cremate the deceased. Their ultimate deity is Sing Bonga, the sun god and universe builder. Sarna, the holy forest next to the settlements, is home to their village god, Desauli. They are known to be proficient earth-diggers. They are also skilled in crafting rope and basketry. **9. Ota and Mahanty (2011)** discussed the ‘Ho’ life and social structure. They have discussed life cycle, puberty, dress and ornaments, divorce, death, settlement and housing, household articles, livelihood, food habits new purchase within the Ho life cycle, birth is regarded as a significant event. Within the Ho community, child birth Singh Bonga (Sungod). Motherhood is much respected by the Ho, and all the family members take special care of the pregnant woman. During Pregnancy, a Ho woman has to follow certain taboos and prohibitions regarding her food. Drink and mobility. She is prohibited from preparing the rice beer, and going outside of the house in the evening alone for an adolescent girl puberty is an important landmark in her life. When the girl attains her first menarche, she has to follow some taboo. She remains in seclusion in an isolated room for seven days. During that period, she was tabooed to attain any ritual, look or talk to any male persons. On the eighth day, she takes a purified cattery bath, anointing oil and turmeric paste and wears new clothes presented by her relatives. The dress

pattern and traditional costumes of Hos are very similar to those of the santhal, Kol and Kolha tribes. 10. **Puhan R. R and MallaLakshmipriya (2015)** People in tribal areas are developing socioeconomically and educationally. They discover that the impact of SHGs on the lives of the impoverished is amply demonstrated by empirical data. Thus the intervention has significantly altered the poor's mindset on saving, while at the same time enabling them to mobilize a sizeable amount of credit with recurring assistance from official finance institutions. The study focuses on the micro-financing of tribals, PTGs, Kalahandi, NABARD and SHG etc. The beneficiaries' and their communities' overall attitudes have now changed for the better. People in underdeveloped areas now have a high self-perception due to a shift in attitude and societal viewpoint, whereas their self-perception was extremely poor prior to the implementation of MF programs. This made it possible for them to observe and understand what was going on outside their remote home. Notwithstanding a number of disadvantages, members generally agreed that their involvement in the MF program had improved their quality of life to some extent.

11. **Nagaraja.S (2020)** International Journal of Management (IJM), India he briefly discusses the sustainable development and empowerment of tribal people. women's contributions to social, cultural, economic, and religious life are recognized in tribal societies. Although they make up half of the global population, women's political, economic, and social circumstances differ from nation to nation. Women's social consciousness and standing in the home and in society are indicators of a country's development. Furthermore, it is essential to explain how governments, the private sector, and international organizations can empower women and how gender parity may accelerate global economic growth. First, a higher national GDP can result from job equality for women. According to their analysis, if women worked as hard as males, the nation's income could increase.

The Objectives of the Study

- To find out the origin of Ho tribes in Mayurbhanj.
- To identify the socio-cultural life of Ho tribes.
- To analyse the source of occupation and economic activities of Ho tribes.
- To analyse the social change, economic development and family patterns of Ho.

Methodology: Tools and Technique

Personal interviews, direct observations, and indirect techniques were used to collect primary data, including informal discussions with government employees (BDO, WEO, and CDPO), NGO functionaries, responders' friends, social workers, press reporters, and bank representatives. These extra resources were used to verify that the respondents' statements about their involvement were accurate. operations, and performance in the economic development of the "Ho Tribe." Data were collected from both secondary and primary sources, encompassing various types of literature such as demographic data, BPL lists, research papers, working papers, journals, and books. The primary data collection tool was a semi-structured interview schedule. Prior to the collection of primary data, a pilot study was carried out in the field area, and the interview schedule was modified accordingly. The final field survey was then executed, and the collected data were processed and codified into the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) program. Subsequent to the final analysis, conclusions were derived.

To achieve the specified objectives, interviews were conducted with 60 men and women belonging to the Ho tribes in the village of Nipania, located within the Thakurmunda block of Odisha's Mayurbhanj District.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Mayurbhanj and Odisha. 2001-2011

Year	Total Population		Decadal Growth Rates		Sex Ratio	
	Mayurbhanj	Odisha	Mayurbhanj	Odisha	Mayurbhanj	Odisha
2001	22,23,456	3,68,04,660	17.98	16.25	980	972
2011	25,19,738	41,974,218	13.3	14.0	1006	979

Source: Census 2001, 2011

Demographic Profile of the District

The district's population experienced a 3.64-fold increase over the last century, growing from 22,23,456 in 2001 to 25,19,738 according to the 2011 Census. Over the same period, the state's growth rate was 3.75 times greater, rising from 3,68,04,660 to 41,974,218. Between 2001 and 2011, various demographic characteristics of the district were compared with those of Odisha in Table 3.1. It is noteworthy that the district's sex ratio (the number of females per 1000 males) showed a consistent decline over the last century, falling from 1006 in 2001 to 980 in 2011.

According to the 2001 Census, 6.04% of the state’s population lived in the district. With a population of 58.7% Scheduled Tribe (ST) and 7.3% Scheduled Caste (SC), Mayurbhanj was a district dominated by tribal people. The Khunta block has the highest population concentration (78.2%), followed by the Bijetola block (76.61%). This is true for all blocks. Relatively more development is seen in the Barasahi, Betanati, Morada, and Suliapada blocks, which have fewer than 50% tribal residents. The percentage is larger in rural areas (60.90%) than in urban areas (17.83%). The tribal population is lowest (8.3%) in Rairangpur NAC and highest (26.3%) in Karanjia NAC among urban areas. All blocks have a same number of SC residents, although urban regions have a greater percentage (10.96%) than rural areas (7.41%).

Table 2. Distribution of the population in study and Mayurbhanj, 2001- 2011

Year	Research area	Total population	Sex ratio	SC population	ST population
2001	Thakurmunda	90115	1011	15.57	63.29
	Mayurbhanj	2223456	980	7.68	56.60
2011	Thakurmunda	57890	1048	5.80	72.40
	Mayurbhanj	2519738	940	7.3	58.7

Source: Census 2001,2011

Administrative Set up of the district

The district is divided into four sub-divisions: Panchpir, Bamanghaty, Baripada, and Kaptipada for administrative convenience. It consists of 32 police stations and 9 tehsils. There are 26 Community Development Blocks in the district, which include 3,966 villages (202 of which are deserted) and 404 Gram Panchayats. There are also three Notified Areas Councils (NACs), one Municipality, and four towns. There are ten Assembly Constituencies in the district overall.

Table 3. Distribution of literacy in the study Block & District.

Year	Research area	Total literacy rate	Male literacy rate	Female literacy rate
2001	Thakurmunda	38.05	51.59	24.68
	Mayurbhanj	51.91	65.76	37.84
2011	Thakurmunda	55.01	55.76	37.34

	Mayurbhanj	63.17	63.22	45.53
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Source: Census 2001,2011

The study is grounded in primary data collected from Nipania village, Thakurmunda Gram Panchayat in Thakurmunda Block, Mayurbhanj district. Employing simple random sampling, a sample of 60 household members was chosen to explore the socio-economic and occupational activities of the Ho tribe, utilizing interview schedules and observation periods. The data was systematically collected through random sampling, with the study focusing on 60 households. The parameters covered aspects such as the respondents' socio-economic conditions, occupations, livelihoods, and educational activities. Additionally, an in-depth study was conducted to gain deeper insights into tribal life in this specific region of Odisha.

Table.1: Age of the Household.

Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
20-25	3	5.0	5.0	5.0
26-30	10	16.7	16.7	21.7
31-35	9	15.0	15.0	36.7
36-40	8	13.3	13.3	50.0
41-45	16	26.7	26.7	76.7
46-50	8	13.3	13.3	90.0
51-55	3	5.0	5.0	95.0
56-60	3	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey

Age composition is a crucial variable in data collection. During the field survey, respondents estimated their age since they lacked birth records or certificates, primarily due to being born into illiterate families. Table number 1 illustrates the age distribution of the respondents, revealing that the highest percentage of households, 26.7% (16), falls in the age group between 41-45. This is followed by 16.7% (10) in the 26-30 age group, 15% (9) in the 31-35 age group, 13.3% (8) in the age group 36-40, 46-50, and 5% (3) in the age groups of 20-25, 51-55, and 56-60. This indicates that among the Ho tribe households, respondents from the 41-45

age groups are more active in participating in the household compared to the younger group of 26-30 and the middle-aged group of 46-50.

Table-2: Sex of the Household

Sex	Frequency	Percent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Male	50	83.3	83.3	83.3
Female	10	16.7	16.7	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey

Concerning social composition, among the 60 households, an overwhelming 83.3% (50) comprised male members, while the remaining 16.7% (10) consisted of female household members. The study found that male members were more responsive to interviews and were eager to participate in the research, aligning with the study's requirements.

Table-3: Marital Status of Household

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Yes	51	85.0	85.0	85.0
No	1	1.7	1.7	86.7
Widow	6	10.0	10.0	96.7
Widower	2	3.3	3.3	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey

Based on the sample size of the study, 85% (51) of households are married, 1.7% (1) is unmarried, 10% (6) are widow-married, and 3.3% (2) are widower-married. The majority, 85% (51), of households are married.

Table-4: Education Level of Households

Education Level	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Illiterate	22	36.7	36.7	36.7

literate	12	20.0	20.0	56.7
Elementary (1-5)	11	18.3	18.3	75.0
High School (9-10)	12	20.0	20.0	95.0
Intermediate	2	3.3	3.3	98.3
Graduate	1	1.7	1.7	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey

Table: 4 displays the education levels within households. In the sample study, 36.7% (22) of household respondents lack literacy. Another 20% (12) are literate but have received informal education after attending school. The remaining 18.3% (11) have completed education up to the elementary (1-5) school level, and 20% (12) have attained high school (8-9) level education. Additionally, 3.3% (2) of households have completed Intermediate/Plus two-level education, and only 1.7% (1) have successfully graduated. Notably, the highest percentage, 36.7% (22), of households are illiterate, while merely 1.7% (1) have achieved a higher education level of Graduation.

Table -5 Family size of the Household

Family	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative percent
Nuclear	23	38.3	38.3	38.3
Joint	37	61.7	61.7	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey

An effort has been undertaken to analyze the family size within households. As depicted in Table:5, out of 60 households, 61.7% (37) constitute a joint family structure, while 38.3% (23) consist of nuclear families. The grandfather is usually the head of the joint family, with the grandmother providing assistance. If he is not around, the mother helps the father. The eldest son undergoes special training from an early age, preparing him to assume the future responsibility of being head of the household. The distribution of family wealth among sons is allowed under sacred laws in the event of the father's death. Family wealth division may also occur when sons

pursue different professions, reside in different towns, or when the family becomes excessively large to manage under one roof. Members of a joint family must: (1) live together in the same home; (2) eat meals prepared in the same kitchen; (3) own property together; and (4) ideally practice the same religion, sect, and sampradaya.

Table:6 Types House of the Household

Type house	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Hut	2	3.3	3.3	3.3
Semi-Pucca	17	28.3	28.3	31.7
Pucca	2	3.3	3.3	35.0
Katcha	35	58.3	58.3	93.3
Semi Pucca with Katcha	4	6.7	6.7	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey

In Table No.6, the distribution of housing types within households is outlined. Approximately 58.3% (35) of households are situated in Katcha houses, while 28.3% (17) reside in semi-pucca structures. Additionally, 6.7% (4) of households have a combination of semi-pucca and Katcha houses. Notably, only 3.3% (2) of households' boast pucca houses, while there is a minimal percentage with huts.

Table-7: Availability of Drinking Water

Drinking water	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
open well	16	26.7	26.7	26.7
River	2	3.3	3.3	30.0
Tubewell	41	68.3	68.3	98.3
river &tubewell	1	1.7	1.7	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey

An inquiry was conducted to ascertain the water sources for potable use in households. According to Table No.7, among the 60 households surveyed, water is obtained from various sources such as open wells, rivers, and tube wells. The majority, 68.3% (41) of households, rely

on tube wells, while 26.7% (16) collect water from open wells. Additionally, 3.3% (2) of households utilize water from rivers, and only 1.7% (1) use a combination of river and tube well water. During the summer, some wells and rivers dry up, rendering them unsuitable for drinking, while in the rainy season, rivers and open wells may become contaminated due to the overflow of hill and road water with mud. Consequently, households situated close to rivers avoid fetching water from them due to concerns about contamination from activities such as clothes washing and cattle bathing.

Table -8: Landholding size of Households

Land area	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Percent
1 acre-2 acre	1	1.7	1.7	1.7
2 acre-4 acre	6	10.0	10.0	11.7
4 acre-6 acre	21	35.0	35.0	46.7
6 acre-8 acre	15	25.0	25.0	71.7
8 acre -10 acre	10	16.7	16.7	88.3
10 acre and more	7	11.7	11.7	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey

Concerning landholding and asset ownership within households, Table No. 8 discloses that among the 60 households surveyed, 35% (21) own 4-6 acres of land, with the next significant category being 25% (15) occupying more than 6-8 acres. Following this, 16.7% (10) of households possess land in the range of 8-10 acres, while 10% (6) own 2-4 acres. Furthermore, 11.7% (7) of households have ownership of more than 10 acres, and a smaller percentage, 1.7% (1), own less than 1-2 acres of land.

Table-9: Occupation of the Household

Occupation	Frequency	Percent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Cultivator	32	53.3	53.3	53.3
Agricultural Labourer	10	16.7	16.7	70.0
Daily Wage Earner	11	18.3	18.3	88.3
Salaried Employee	3	5.0	5.0	93.3

Petty Business	4	6.7	6.7	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey

The shift in occupation is evident in the primary activities individuals undertake to sustain their livelihoods. Among the surveyed households, predominant engagements include cultivation, agricultural labour, daily wage earning, salaried employment, petty businesses, and other miscellaneous work, with a notable percentage 50(30) relying on cultivation for their livelihood. Agricultural laborers constitute 15% (9) of respondents, while 18.3% (11) depend on daily wage earnings. Salaried employees make up a mere 5% (3), and those involved in petty businesses account for 6.7% (4). Additionally, 3.3% of households rely on alternative occupations, and 1.7% have no occupational activity, primarily due to old age. This underscores a diverse landscape in livelihood sources, with a significant reliance on cultivation observed among 50% of respondents.

Table- 10: Annual Income of the Household

Annual Income	Frequency	Percent
10,000 – 20,000	4	6.7
21,000 – 30,000	7	11.6
31,000 – 40,000	7	11.6
41,000 – 50,000	12	20.0
51,000 – 60,000	8	13.4
61,000 – 70,000	7	11.6
71,000 Above	15	25.1
Total	60	100

Source: Field Survey

Table No. 10 provides a detailed breakdown of the annual incomes within the surveyed households. Out of the 60 households, 25.1% (15) report an annual income of Rs. 71,000 above, while 20.0% (12) of respondents earn varying amounts such as Rs. 41,000- 50,000. Another 13.4% (8) of households have annual incomes approximately ranging from Rs. 51,000 – 60,000. Additionally, 11.6% (7) of respondents report annual incomes in the range of Rs.21, 000-30,000, Rs. 31,000-40,000 and Rs. 61,000- 70,000. The remaining 6.7% (4) of respondents earn diverse annual incomes, including Rs. 10,000-20,000.

Major Findings:

Over 50 percent of the paddy cultivators in the 90 Ho villages are marginal farmers and do not cultivate crops throughout the entire year. They rely on other economic activities, such as Tasar rearing and lack collections. Although these activities serve as supplementary sources of income to paddy cultivation, they have a longstanding association with Ho socio-economic practices. Tur, a type of silk produced by wild silk, Arjun, and Palas trees found in the forest area, involves skills acquired through their long association with the forest. It is not just the monetary aspect that matters; the socio-economic context within which such rearing occurs is essential to the Ho. Numerous religious rituals are associated with these rearing activities. The Ho people venture into quiet parts of the forest and construct temporary sheds for these purposes.

Most of the relevant literature was reviewed for this dissertation. The gaps were critically analyzed, and problems were also identified through the literature in Chapter Three. The district profile has been presented in the dissertation through representational maps. Showed how the tribes of Mayurbhanj have developed socioeconomically, with Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDAs) operating in Baripada, Udala, Karanjia, and Rairangpur. In accordance with the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) methodology, the ITDAs carry out integrated development initiatives for the district's entire tribally dominated areas as well as the tribal population. These agencies do, however, confront a number of difficulties, such as a lack of personnel, inadequate funding, and the presence of competing development organizations in these tribally dominated regions. Tribal development procedures in the area have been equally harmed by the state's lack of a single-window fund flow and a single-line administration.

The chapter included quantitative information on the household income distribution, the literacy rate, and the trend of income diversification. This information helps to understand the scope and severity of marginalization in comparison, emphasizing the growing disadvantages experienced by people who were initially less fortunate. Most importantly, it highlights the state's involvement in escalating rather than decreasing this inequality. Additionally, the chapter shows how individual accumulation and differentiation lead to state creation, allowing upward social mobility for a very small portion of the population. It also mystifies these important political processes while enabling bureaucratic control over marginalized 'masses'.

During the field survey, respondents provided their ages based on estimations, as they lack birth records or certificates, given that many come from illiterate families. Table 1 displays the ages of the respondents, revealing that 26.7% (16) are in the age group of 41-45, followed by 16.7% (10) in the 26-30 age group, and 15% (9) fall within the 31-35 age group. Additionally, 13.3% (8) are in the age groups of 36-40 and 46-50, while 5% (3) fall into the age groups of 20-25, 51-55, and 56-60. This indicates that, within the Ho tribe households, respondents aged 41-45 are more actively engaged in household participation compared to the younger group (26-30) and the middle-aged group (46-50).

In this field survey, both males and females participated; out of 60 respondents, an overwhelming 83.3% (50) were male members, while the remaining 16.7% (10) were female respondents. According to the study's requirements, the male participants were notably more responsive to the interviews and demonstrated a keen interest in participating in the study.

In this field survey, both males and females participated, including individuals who were married, unmarried, widowed, and widower-married among the respondents. The survey indicated that the majority of the respondents, comprising 85% (51 individuals), were married. Unmarried respondents constituted 1.7% (1 individual), while 10% (6 individuals) were widow-married, and 3.3% (2 individuals) were widower-married. The highest percentage, 85% (51 individuals), belonged to the married category.

In this data collection, the researcher presents education level data among the Ho tribe of Nipania village. The respondents exhibit a very low level of literacy. The conclusion drawn is that the prevalence of illiteracy is primarily due to the majority being engaged in cultivation, daily labour, and having limited income sources, coupled with challenging family situations. Many individuals migrate to other states for employment, and numerous children abandon their studies to work in companies located outside the state. This contributes to the increasing rates of illiteracy and school dropouts.

In the sampled study, 36.7 percent (22) of household respondents are illiterate. Another 20 percent (12) are literate but have attended school, receiving informal education. An additional 18.3 percent (11) have received education up to the elementary (1-5) school level, while 20 percent (12) have attained high school (8-9) level education. Only 3.3 percent (2) of respondents

have completed Intermediate or Plus Two-level education, and a mere 1.7 percent (1) have graduated. The highest percentage, 36.7 percent (22), consists of illiterate respondents, with only 1.7 percent (1) achieving a higher education level of graduation.

Most of the respondents' primary occupation is agriculture, with some working as agricultural laborers. The majority of the respondents fall into the poor category, often working as laborers on others' land due to their economic circumstances. This study highlights that most respondents have low incomes, engaging primarily in farming and daily labour.

Occupations are described based on the principal activities individuals undertake to sustain their livelihoods. The respondents in this study were engaged in various occupations, including cultivation, agricultural labour, daily wage earning, salaried employment, petty business, other work, or no work. Out of the 60 household respondents, 50% (30) percent are cultivators, earning their livelihoods through cultivation. Those relying on agricultural labor make up 15% (9) percent, while 18.3 percent (11) are daily wage earners. Salaried employees constitute a small percentage at 5 percent (3), and 6.7 percent (4) are engaged in petty businesses for their livelihood. Currently, 3.3 percent (2) of respondents depend on other work, and finally, 1.7 percent (1) of respondents have no occupation due to old age. The highest percentage, 50 (30%) percent, belongs to the cultivator category among the respondents' occupations for their livelihoods.

This study explores the annual income of respondents, revealing that a significant majority have low incomes, indicating the prevalence of poverty in this village with meager earnings. Many individuals seek employment outside the village to sustain their families.

Out of the 60 household respondents, 6.7 percent (4) reported an annual income between Rs. 10,000- 20,000. Among the respondents, 11.6 percent (7) were daily wage earners with an annual income of Rs. 21,000-30,000. Some farmers, owning medium-sized lands, generated income by selling their own winter vegetables, constituting 11.6 percent (7) with an annual income of Rs. 31,000-40,000. Furthermore, 20 percent (12) of respondents reported an annual income of Rs. 41,000-50,000 and 13.4 percent (8) had a income of Rs. 51,000-60,000 per annual. Lastly, 11.6 percent (7) of respondents each reported an annual income of Rs. 61,000-70,000.

The highest reported annual income is Rs. 71,000 above accounting for 25.1 percent (15) of respondents.

The study also examined the family size of respondents within the Ho tribe, where families generally maintain good relations and understanding. Both joint and nuclear family structures are observed in the Ho tribe in Nipania. In a joint family, the household head, typically the grandfather, plays a crucial role in resolving family issues and all members of the family work together quite well. However, the modern impact on the Ho tribe has led to the emergence of nuclear families in rural areas.

The analysis of family size among the respondents, based on a sample of 60, reveals that 61.7% (37) percent of families are joint families, while 38.3% (23) percent are nuclear families. In a joint family, the head is typically the grandfather, supported by the grandmother (if alive), and in his absence, the father is supported by the mother. The eldest son receives special training from his father from an early age to prepare for the future responsibility of being the head of the family. The distribution of family fortune among sons is permitted by sacred law in the event of the father's passing. Family wealth division may also occur when sons pursue different professions, live in different towns, or when the size of the family becomes unmanageable.

Members who live together, make and share meals in the same kitchen, own property together, and ideally practice the same religion, sect, and sampradaya are the primary traits of a joint family.

This field survey explores the annual agricultural expenditure of the respondents, highlighting the predominant occupation of farming in Nipania village. Given that a significant portion of the population engages in farming, they allocate funds for annual agricultural activities. However, due to the prevalent poverty among farmers, their capacity for expenditure is limited.

In Nipania village, the primary occupation is agriculture, and the annual agricultural expenditure is distributed as follows: 18.3% (11) of respondents spend Rs. 15,000, 11.7% (7) spend Rs. 5,000 annually, and 10% (6) have an expenditure ranging from Rs. 2,000 to Rs. 10,000. The remaining 6.7% (4) of respondents allocate an annual agriculture expenditure between Rs. 3,000 and Rs. 12,000. Additionally, 5% (3) of respondents have an annual expenditure ranging from Rs. 4,000 to Rs. 20,000 in the agriculture sector. Among them, 3.3% (2) of respondents spend between Rs.

1,000 and Rs. 30,000 annually on agricultural activities. Only 1.7% (1) of respondents have an annual agriculture expenditure between Rs. 1,700 and Rs. 22,000.

This field survey depicts the annual education expenditure of respondents, shedding light on the challenges faced by the economically disadvantaged. The Ho tribe, a prominent village community, experiences a high illiteracy rate among respondents, emphasizing the pressing need for education awareness in the Ho tribes of Nipania. Presently, education holds paramount importance, and efforts are underway to educate all children in schools and colleges. However, the cost of education poses a significant burden.

24 Among the 60 respondents, 10% (6) allocate an annual education expenditure of Rs. 1,000, Rs. 2,000, and Rs. 5,000 each. The remaining 8.3% (5) of respondents spend Rs. 10,000 annually, while 6.7% (4) allocate Rs. 500, and 5% (3) allocate Rs. 3,000, Rs. 6,000, and Rs. 15,000 each for education. Additionally, 3.3% (2) of respondents spend Rs. 1,500, Rs. 4,000, Rs. 7,000, and Rs. 25,000 annually, while 21.7% (13) of respondents report an annual education expenditure of Rs. 0. Only 1.7% (1) of respondents allocate Rs. 600, Rs. 700, and Rs. 2,500 each for education. The insufficient earnings of family members contribute to their inability to adequately support their children's education.

26
22 This field survey presents the various types of houses among the respondents in the studied village. The village inhabited by the Ho tribe features a range of housing structures, including huts, semi-pucca, pucca, kutchha, and semi-pucca with kutchha houses. However, the living conditions of the Ho tribe people in this village are not optimal, with the majority residing in kutchha houses. Some respondents live in hut houses, and overall, the income sources for the majority of respondents are not favorable.

Conclusion,

The tribal people of Odisha are facing various challenges which hinder their livelihoods. The factors which causes challenges are modern technological changes, lack of education, high commodity prices, and diminished agricultural productivity. The tribal people are very much influenced by the modernisation that marginalised their cultural, social and ritual activities. Agriculture remains central to their economy, with rice cultivation based on different land types.

34 Due to industrialisation and implementation of different development scheme by central and state government the tribal people are engaged in other work also for their livelihood. The Ho, along with other local tribes such as the Santal and Bathudi, navigate a complex socio-economic landscape affected by biodiversity loss and natural calamities. Overall, the study of the Ho tribe reveals critical issues of marginalization and resource control, accentuating the need for strategies that empower the community economically and socially, particularly for women and younger generations.

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