



SOCIO-ECONOMIC LIFE OF JUANG TRIBE WOMEN IN ODISHA : A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

In tribal societies there are 62 categories of Tribes in Orissa. Out of them 13 have been identified as primitive tribes. In Keonjhar District, Juang is one of them.. Women are treated as economic assets and envisage a major role in their family. She is the gatherer of fruits, roots, timbers, co-workers with men in house-hold affairs and agricultural fields. As such the role of Juang Women in relation to their social habits is reflected herewith in the basis of their participation in village Dormitory, Family life. Position in family, Marriage, Demography. Population, Sex ratio, literacy. Rhythms of life, tradition and customs with work participation and economic status. She is the home-maker she decides the place for hearth and a/so for bed of the family. She also enjoys equal social rights and duties in rearing of the children with her husband.. The women organizes the details off all activities at home or in the community and also enjoys the final say in social events- be it child birth, marriage or any cultural activities or ritual in the family and her suggestion is respected by all despite being a patriarchal society.

Through this paper we want to highlight the role and active participation of Juang Women in Keonjhar District in Social Institution and also how they tried their level best to develop their economic status. The researcher would gather data through both primary and secondary sources. Primary data would be collected through Gazetteers and Govt. records. The secondary data would comprise of journals, books, periodicals and websites covering the area of study.

Keywords: Cultural, Juang, Patriarchal Society, Socio-Economic, Women.

Introduction :

In tribal societies women are treated as economic assets and envisage a major role in their family. She is the gatherer of fruits, roots, timbers, co-workers with men in house-hold affairs and agricultural fields. The term "Tribe has its origin from the Hat in word "TRIBUS" means one of the divisions of the ancient Roman people. Hence by origin, tribe is a division (a section, a group) of people. India is a land of diversities in respect of caste, class, language and customs, but its society represents a very unique picture of unity among diversity.

Varieties of cultural traits are found in different forms, from caste to caste, religion to religion and they have distinctive patterns and levels of economic life. But cultural identification or ways of living is still strong among tribals. Particularly. Indian cultural groups are broadly classified into two categories-tribal and non-tribal- Both the groups inherit rural culture, but tribal set of life is quite unique and probably more humanitarian. Prosperity of a culture is revealed through the status of its women in the society. There are 62 categories of tribes in Orissa.

There are few tribals, who have not been classified. The tribals reside in a contiguous belt. The districts of Mayurbhanj, Koraput, Maikangiri, Nowrangpur, Rayagada, Gajapati, Sundergarh, Keonjhar, Phulbani and Sambalpur. have high concentration of tribal population, the districts

cut by Eastern Ghats and the Vindhya ranges have a large percentage of tribal population.

The diversity among the tribes is as Kaleidoscopic as the non-tribal population. They are in various stages of development in economic, educational and cultural fields out of 62 tribes, 13 have been identified as primitive tribes in consideration of their pre-agricultural level of technology, low level of literary and a stagnant or diminishing population. The sixty two tribal communities that inhabit the state are widely different from one another in terms of demography, house pattern dress and ornaments, social life, economic life, social organization, religious practices, plastic and performing arts and traditional crafts, language and degree of acculturation.

There are 15 major categories of tribes having a population of more than one lakh. They are Gondo, Kolha, Bhumijji, Bhottuda or DhoLada, Bhatudi, Bhuiyan or Bhuiya. In an Indian context, the tribe refers the indigenous people usually designated in Vanyajati (the forest dwellers), Adivasi (the aboriginal settlers), Janajati (the autochthonous people). Girijan (the hill dwellers), Adimajati (the aboriginal people). Those tribe which are listed under the 5th and 6th schedule of the constitution designated as the Anuscharita Janajati (the Scheduled Tribes).

Historically women were not always oppressed. The primitive society was community oriented. At that time

women had equal status of all production was social. With the change in the mode of production, the concept of private property as distinct from community one slowly arose. Arid this is the beginning of inequality between men and women. Even though today women constitute almost 50 percent of the population, 50 percent of the electorate and bear more than half of the work burden, their participation (social, economic and political) in the society has been very insignificant and this again is not a matter of accident, rather a product of lopsided development.

But the case of tribal women is a different one. Tribal folk lores and songs have eulogized the role of a women plays in a tribal household down the centuries. She is the home-maker she decides the place for hearth and also for bed of the family. She also enjoys equal social rights and duties in rearing of the children with her husband. There is no strict separation of powers as such among men and women but a tribal male is ready to help his female counterpart in all areas of work. The women organizes the details off all activities at home or in the community and also enjoys the final say in social events- be it child birth, marriage or any cultural activities or ritual in the family and her suggestion is respected by all despite being a patriarchal society.

Keonjhar district is located in the north part of the state between 21° 1" N and 22° 10' N Latitude and 85° 11' E and 86° 22" E Longitude with an area of 8,240 Sq kms. Mainly the Juanga are living in the hill ranges of Gonasika, Gandhamardan and Mankadnacha and also in plain lands of the district. They speak language, which can be classified under the munda belonging to the austic sub-family of the Austro Asiatic language family, where as Tuang Community consists of 0.52% of tribal population of the state of Odisha. Social, cultural and religious life of Odisha has been considerably shaped and influenced by tribal traditions.

Tribals of Keonjhar :

In keonjhar district there are are 59 tribal communities such as Bathudi, Bagata, Baiga, Banjara, Bhattada, Bhuyan, Bhumia, Binjhah Rtnjhia, Bhumij, Bhunjia, Birhar, "Bonda-parja, Chenchu, Dal, Desua, Didayi, Gandia, Ghana, Ghond, Ho, Holva, Jatapu, Juang, Kondha, Goudu, Kawar, Kherian, Kliarwar, kond,kol Kolha-lohaves, Kisan, Kolha, kondadora, Koli, Kona, Korua, Kotio, Koya, Kulis, Lodha, Mahali, Mankidi, Mankidia, Matya, Mirdhas, Munda, Mundari, Oraon, Omanatya, Paroja, Parenga. Pentia, Rajkan, Santal, Shabar, Saora, Tharua and Saunti. Out of these 59 tribes juang were primitive tribal group of keonjhar.

Juang :

The Juangs, one of the primitive tribal groups declared as a vulnerable tribe by the Govt. of India during 5th plan(1974-1979) period in order to put special emphasis for their all round development in Orissa State. The Juangs are mainly found in Telkoi, Banspal and Harichandpur blocks of Keonjhar and Kankadahada of Kamakshyanagar

sub-division in Dhenkanal district. They claim the Juang pirth of Keonjhar district as their home land. Where they have migrated to other part of the state. Ethnically the Juangs are considered a branch of Munda group. They belong to prolo-Australoid racial stock and speak a language of their own racial stock and speak a language of their own which comes under Austria group.

Socio-Economic life of Juang Women in Keonjhar district :

According to 2011 census, the state. Odisha has a population of 41, 947,358, divided into several castes and tribes, most of the people live in rural areas. One of the demographic features of this state is it population, that is distributed into 62 communities. According to 201] census, the scheduled tribe population of the Indian (ST) is 10,42,81,304 and (ST) in population in Odisha is 9,590,756 and 22.85% of the total population of the state. The male person (ST) is 47,27,732 and female (ST) is 48,63,024." These tribes are concentrated mostly in the western hill districts of Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Dhenkanal, Sundergarh and Koraput. These 62 tribal groups are widely different from one another in term of their numerical strength, economic development, performance of religious rites and level of acculturation.

Position of Women :

It is very interesting to note that the role of women in the socio-economic and culture spheres of the juang community. For the management and development of family the role of women was very impartment. Life of a juang family was most peaceful, without tension and conflict. The women played a vital role for the management of the family. In even occasion the juang women were considered as an important asset to the family. Most agricultural activities were done by women.

Though there arc so many numbers of government programmes for their development -have swept over their traditional social system and culture they are yet to be in touch with their traditional social institution according to their motive and taste.

As such the role of Juang "Women in relation to their social habits is reflected herewith in the basis of their participation in village Dormitory, Family life, Position in family, Marriage, Demography, Population, Sex ratio, literacy, Rhythms of life, tradition and customs with work participation and economic status. The change of the Juang Women through the development programmes on Govt. to empowerment and participation is important indicator to find out their status in present day context.

Rote of Women in Village in Majang and Darbar :

A Juang female child begins her life after entering into majang the village dormitory, their traditional youth organisation. In Odisha this institution occurs among many tribal communities in some form or other. The Juang call it Majang and Darbar, the Bhuiyan call it Mandaghar or Darbarghar, The Kandhs call it Dhangar iddu and among the Bondas it goes by the name Ingersin of ail the tribes

the dormitory system is well organised among the Juangs. Dhangiribasa the spinsters dormitory or the past has been disintegrate all together at present and the activities of the unmarried girls are associated with the bachelors dormitory. The Institution of dormitory thus occupied position in the Juang society and plays a very significant role for establishing tribal solidarity. The Juangs are very conscious of their heritage and claimed that they are the first men born on earth and descent from two human beings-Rusi-the-saint and Rusiani his concert created by Dharma Deota, their sun God. Rusi Tangara a hillock near Gonasika in Keonjhar is their original homeland where the couple was living with a son from themselves. The Earth was in liquid form then and the Dharma Deota thought of making the earth solid and suitable for human settlement, sprinkled the blood of Rusi putra by killing him. As a result the Earth became steady and from the palms and the fact of Rusi's son hills and valleys emerged. Rivers and streams flowed from the nostrils and eyes respectively and forest species from his hairs. Rusi was again blessed with sons and daughters and they gave birth to Juangs.

The Juangs classify them into two sections one is the 'Thaniya' (those who dwell in the original habitation) and the other is the Bhagudia (those who have moved to other places). It is assumed that the Juangs lived in the neighbouring Dhenkanal district are migrated from Keonjhar. Dance forms an integral part of the rituals and social festivals of Juangs. It provides opportunity to the young girls and boys to mix each other and to develop courtship and love. The traditional rules and social decorum doesn't allow the girls and boys of Kutumba village to dance together and only unmarried boys of Bandhu village can dance with the unmarried girls of Kutumba village and viceversa. Normally they perform dance in front of "Mandaghar" at Birth and Mortuary customs.

After the birth of a child they observe pollution for seven days on that day the mother takes a sacred bath by applying turmeric. She throws away the old earthen pots and cleans the house and washes her clothes. She herself cuts the hair of baby. On the occasion of name giving ceremony a thread is tied round the child's waist. The Juangs do not allow their pregnant women to go to Devasthan. She must not tie up anything, must not weave mat, or plaster a house with mud. The Juangs cremate their dead. The corpse is laid on the pyre with the head to the south. The ashes may be left on the spot of the cremation or alternatively they may be thrown into a stream. A propitiatory ceremony is held a few days after in which the maternal uncle of the dead person acts as a priest offerings are made to the ancestors when the autumn rice crop is harvesting.

The total culture of Orissa has been throughout nourished and nurtured by the tribal traditions from ancient times. The cult and culture of Lord Jagannath which forms the core of Orissan civilization and which stands out for its uniqueness in the whole world had its humble origin in a tribal society. Today the music and dance

forms of the tribals of Orissa have earned a great name all over the world. The tribals constitute a major segment in the population map of Orissa. The sixty two tribal communities found in Orissa are the largest number in the country. So it is thus natural that the non-tribals living with close proximity with the tribals for centuries are considerably influenced by the tribal traditions and culture. Both are influenced by each other's lifestyle and 'give' and 'take' is bound to occur as no one can remain aloof and detached from each other. That is why Orissan culture is regarded as integrated composite culture.

The Supreme God of the Hindus, Lord Jagannath had been the God of Savaras and Saoras, Half hewn wooden deities of the Adivasis have great geographical identity with Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra. Jagannath culture is an embodiment of social equality and tolerance and the tribal societies of Orissa possess deep sense of equality and tolerance towards others. The lifestyle of the tribals is so colourful that music and dance form a part of their day-to-day life. They live to sing and sing to live. The artistic skill of the tribal people is not only manifested in their dance and music but also in their dress, ornaments, wall paintings and wood carvings. We can never forget the gems of the tribals who have glittered our society and culture.

Economic life of Juangs and Role of the women :

Women development and empowerment prospective is different from each other in some important ways. Women empowerment signifies increase in women's power to achieve equality with men. Women in Juang Family enjoy a better economic status in comparison to the women of local non-tribal society. They dominate the household affairs and have a major share towards family economy. They work with the men flock in the field, toil together and pursue positive outlook in all economic activities. In the tribal societies the Juang women are treated as economic assets and in village a major role in their family. There is no strict supervision of power as such among men and women but a tribal male is ready to help his female counterpart in all areas of work.

The Economic life of Juang is mostly based on the forest product, agriculture and their pattern of household economy is confined to the forest only. They collect Kendu leaf which is collected by the authority of the forest department used as Bidi (the traditional smoking). They collect forest product like Mahula (maduca indica) fruits of Sala (shorea robusta), tree which they produce oil for household purpose and kitchen, Kendu, Chara the raw sweep (jhadu), Jhuna, Honey and different types of medicinal plant, sell it in the market even we can see the Juang women sale the Kendu, Kusuma koli, Baincha koli, Char koli in the snaky N.H. road side of the Kanjipani hill. The Juang women also collected the Sala leaf from the forest, from which they make Dona and Khali. They also collected the branches of Sala trees which is used as (Danta kathi), tooth brush of highly medicinal value. They also collected. Mushroom, Mango etc. from the forest for the develop of their economic condition. Due to the mining

in the Keonjhar district some of the people engaged themselves in the mining area and engaged themselves predatorial activities, piscatorial activities, hunting, fishing etc. In every sphere the Juang women participated and helped a lot for their economic development.

Like the other tribal community of Odisha the Juang classify their land into different category with their topography, soil, colour, texture and water retaining capacity where, which type of crops can be grown. They divided their land in two categories, one is Sukha Jamin and the other is Bahal Jamin. Again Sukha Jamin is sub-divided in Aat Jamin, Maa! Jamin. In Bahala Jamin the Juangs were cultivate the paddy only because these lands are very fertile and suitable for the cultivation of Paddy. In the Sukha Jamin they produce the Guda Dhana (which is grown in plain area were a little water is needed). Bin, Harada, Kolatha, Mung., Mandia, Kodo which is cultivated most probably in the month of December where there is scanty rainfall.

Shifting cultivation is one of the most important plants of livelihood of Juang of Keonjhar district. In Sukha Jamin they produce tomato, Jute, Brinjal and potato etc. Now-a-days they have also started subsidiary occupation like Tassar cultivation, Tassar reeling, weaving and Tailoring etc. Terrace Cultivation is one of the important featured of livelihood of Juang living in the hilly tracts, They cultivate paddy like Kodo, Bazara, Mandia, Jute, Kandula, Maka etc. paddy cultivation is an important pattern of livelihood of Juang. They used local seeds like Annapurna, Swarna etc.

Juang generally harvest their crop with traditionally built equipments like Bullock and Hoes, the plough which is made of wood, axe and spades are used to clean the field. The harvest crop is cut with Sickle (Daa). They collect the harvesting crop with the help of a stick which is made of wood and they keep the crop in Khala where they thrashed the paddy with the help of Bullock. The cow dung and some leaf of different trees are kept on a big square circular whole for year and they used it as fertilizer. The preservation method of the crop is quite marvelous, first they dried the crop in the sunlight and then they keep it in the home which is made with the straw of the crop called Machha or Pura or Purug. The Mung, Biri are preserved after carefully dried in sunlight and mixed the neem leaf (which protected from insects). These works are completely done by the Juang women to develop their economic condition.

Conclusion :

Like the other tribals of Orissa, the Juangs of Keonjhar are exposed mainly to the social and economic problems. Although now-a-days Juangs have experienced a number of changes in their socio-economic and cultural life due to development projects undertaking by the government plans and schemes should not be implemented such a manner that will lead to cripple the unique character and identity of tribals in our society. In the process of development the material culture on Juangs and their

socio-religious traditions have suffered a lot. It is high time to scrutiny the development plan and projects and such projects of random implementation may not be allowed in order to protect their original living habits and socio-cultural tradition.

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