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**RITUAL EFFECT, MIGRATION AND IMPOVERISHMENT
OF TRIBES: A SOCIO-CULTURAL MAPPING OF
LIVELIHOOD OPTIONS IN A TRIBAL VILLAGE OF
ODISHA**

Abstract

In India, Tribals are the most socio-economically deprived segments of population. No doubt in the post-liberalisation period the increased expansion of trade and industry benefited educated middle class and upper-class section of population but people from the lower socio-economic background are still struggling for their existence. In some way, industrialization brought benefit to the people by providing low-paid jobs and for this reason large chunk of tribal population migrated to urban and industrial zones in search of livelihood. No doubt, migration accrues benefit overall to group and communities in the tribal areas but they also lose many political and economic opportunities created by the state. Based on a micro study in a tribal village of Odisha, the current study highlights while the better educated and better connecting Sounti tribal migrants benefit from the process of migration, poor Munda tribes lead an impoverished life due to landlessness, low agricultural output, indebtedness and unending involvement with lowly paid wage labour and lack of awareness with regard to culture of saving and investment on future returns such as education of children.

Keywords: Ritual, Culture, Poverty, Scheduled Tribes, Migration, Odisha

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Introduction

Multiple livelihood as a survival strategy has been adopted by poor households (De Haan, 2000, Ellis, 1999) in most of the developing countries including India due to the unpredictable consequences to the economy, polity and social structure. While the process of globalization has generated new hopes for the highly educated, urbanized and elite section of society to reap benefits from the contemporary revolution in science and technology, expansion

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of trade and industry, lack of avenues in rural and backward areas has created discontent and disenchantment among large section of population. Thus, the nature of social inequalities is marked at several levels such as between the village and town, between male and female and between marginalized ethnicities and the dominant castes or communities (Singh,2004).

In terms of social structure and social backwardness, Scheduled Tribes (STs) are at the bottom on a range of development indicators including consumption and poverty (De Haan and Dubey, 2005). No doubt, large scale programmes are being undertaken for the development of Tribal population, the extent of poverty hasn't declined up to the expectation. NFHS (National Family Health Survey(NFHS) survey reveals that the poverty rate among Scheduled Tribes fell by 31 percent between 1983-84 and 2004-05. But it isn't faster compared to the declining rate of 35 percent among the Scheduled Castes and an average overall decline for All India of 40 percent (NFHS, 1983, 2004-05).

As far as livelihood strategy concerned, Scheduled Tribes with self-employment in Agriculture as principal means of livelihood, constitute to 42 percent of the rural Scheduled Tribe population in 1993-94 and with a lower than average HCR. In 1999-2000, with a reduced (39 per cent) share in total ST population in rural India. On the other hand, Scheduled Tribe households with agriculture labour as the principal means of livelihood accounted for 43 per cent of the poor population in rural Scheduled Tribe households. This share of agriculture labour households rose sharply to a little under 52 per cent in 1999-2000. But taken together, the self-employed in Agriculture and Agricultural Labour households constitute 85 per cent of Poor in ST households in rural areas. Therefore, large number of tribal people prefer to migrate since agriculture does not provide sustenance for whole year for a sizeable number of households ((Shah, 1984, Shah et. al,2008) even during normal years but ST migrants are limited to low pay, unskilled, less secure work at destination (Mosse et. al.,2002), which further alienate them from having a safe and secure livelihood.

The paper discusses the link between poverty, migration and ritual activity and policy implication in four sections. The first section briefly discusses the different livelihood strategies adopted by Scheduled Tribes in India. The second section elaborates on research design and third section draws an elaborate picture of different livelihood options of Scheduled Tribes in the village in which author undertook a micro study. The fourth section discusses the links between poverty, migration and ritual activity while the final chapter discusses the policy implications.

Methodology and Research Setting

Both quantitative and qualitative data were used following interview-

schedule and observation schedule to collect the pertinent in 2009-10 as part of dissertation work. Interview schedule was administered to the head of households and elder members of different communities separately. In addition, observation guide was used to get into the contextual interaction between different ethnic groups. These multiple uses of data collection were put together, with the expectation that the researcher will be able to seek the holistic understanding of the processes operating in the community setting among both tribal and non-tribal group of children.

The village "Tikaposi" situated in the Patna block of Keonjhar district presents a unique but panoramic characteristic of nature of its population. Like most of the villages situated in the district, multi-groups of households also share the space with each other in the village though they live in separate sector and sub-sector of the village. There are two tribal groups i.e. Sounti, and Munda and one non-tribal group, Mahanta, belonging to OBC caste in the village. The socio-economic life and ritual space of each tribe is different from each other, which is clearly marked in their day-to-day life. It was found that the differentiation within tribes is visible in terms of occupation, landholdings and also in the cultural and religious spheres. Mahanta, the non-tribal group, is economically better off than all other social groups. Each group of people have their exclusive area of residence. There are seven hamlets in the village and the distribution of hamlets has some social values attached to them.

There are 171 households in the village out of which, Munda group is the single largest group, with 75 households constituting 44 per cent of the total households. On the other hand, there are 35 and 57 of the households from Mahanta and Sounti community respectively constituting 22.80 per cent and 25.25 per cent of the total population in the village. Joined together, the tribal groups constitute 66.65 per cent of the total households. The total population in the village numbers to 871, out of which 414 are female and 457 are male. The percentage of female population is 47.53 per cent of the total population. The Munda population is 42.12 per cent of the total population while Mahanta and Sounti population count to 32.60 per cent and 25.25 per cent of the total population respectively. Thus, the tribal population constitutes 67.40 per cent of the total population and the caste Hindus (Mahanta caste) constitutes only 32.60 per cent of the total population.

The main revenue village, which has most of the social and religious institutions, is inhabited by both Sounti and Mahanta communities. They have their habitation in two different sides of the road, opposite to each other. The school is near to these two habitations and also the temples and transport and communication facility etc. Both have easy access to temples as they need to perform the rituals and certain purification rites. Mahanta settlements are located in the direction where no Munda households have their settlements, thus there would be no requirement from Munda households to walk through

the Mahanta Settlement. The concept of purity and pollution attaches not only to groups and individuals but also to places as well. The logic well-matches to the description given in the study of Sripuram village by Beteille² where the settlements of Brahmin are located near the temple and the households of some untouchable caste was away from the habitation, inhabited by Brahmin group of people. (Beteille, 1966)

Apart from the main revenue village, the model of settlement is similar in the other two hamlets, namely, Dhipsahi and Gadgadi Sahi, inhabited by Mahanta group of households. While one of the habitation is located adjacent to road at the one end of the village, having no need for the Munda households to go through, another one is located in the same model at the other end of village, a little distance from revenue village. The main principle behind the setting of the settlement is the rationale of purity and pollution. In the similar fashion, the Sountis have also their settlement in Tap Sahi and Upper Sahi, two hamlets of the village.

On the other hand, Mundas have their settlement at the outskirts of village, a little bit far from the settlement of Sounti groups. Mundas live in Baghiabeda, Rengal Beda and Chhatarsahi, different hamlets of the village. In these hamlets, each group located at a distance of a quarter of 100 meters of distance from each other.

Livelihood Options of people in Ethnic Differentiated Settings

There exists plethora of studies that take distribution in economy and wealth as the basis to differentiate various groups (may be caste groups or tribes) (Shah, 1984, Sarkar, Mishra, Nathan and Dayal, 2006). The difference in economic aspect between different groups are largely marked in terms of access to and ownership of assets-financial, natural and resource based. In addition, they comprise inequality in income levels and employment opportunities, which depends on such assets and general condition of the economy. In the following sub-section, we examine the various factors like the pattern of occupation, land ownership, household assets and differences in income, expenditure and credit facility and debt etc.

Pattern of Occupation and employment

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood across all the ethnic groups. An overwhelming majority (73.1%) from across the section predominantly depend on agriculture to maintain their livelihood. About 87 per cent of the Mahantas are engaged in cultivation, in comparison to that of 68 per cent and 61.5 per cent respectively from Munda and Sounti groups of households in agricultural occupation. The Mundas raise only food crops for domestic and local consumption. Cash crops, doesn't find a place in their economy. But some Mahantas cultivate cash crops to raise their income. Agricultural production is supplemented by animal husbandry and poultry farming etc. Unlike non-tribal groups, Mundas promote poultry farming at a small scale only for their

consumption and more importantly for festive occasion. Sometimes, they sell out a single cock to the market to meet their emergent needs. (Table-1).

Table-1: Occupation of households distributed by Social Groups

Social Groups	Size of Land holding							Total
	Less than 1 Acre	1-2 acre	2-3 acre	3-4 acre	4-5 acre	More than 5 acres	No land	
Mahanta								
Total income								
Less than 15000	1.8%	15.8%	5.3%		1.8%		5.3%	29.8%
Rs 15000-30,000		8.8%	10.5%	5.3%	8.8%	7.0%		24.6%
Rs 30,000-45,000	1.8%	12.3%	1.8%	3.5%	3.5%			33.3%
Rs 45,00-60,000					1.8%			5.3%
Rs 6,0000-75,000			1.8%					3.5%
More than 90000				1.8%		1.8%		3.5%
Total	3.5%	24.6%	29.8%	12.3%	15.8%	8.8%	5.3%	100.0%
Munda								
Total income								
Less than 15000	46.7%	5.3%	9.3%		4.0%			70.7%
Rs 15000-30,000	13.3%	2.7%	2.7%					22.7%
Rs 30,000-45,000			2.7%					2.7%
Rs 6,0000-75,000								1.3%
More than 90000	1.3%	1.3%						2.7%
Total	61.3%	9.3%	16.0%		4.0%		9.3%	100.0%
Sounti								
Total income								
Less than 15000	17.9%	12.8%	2.6%		2.6%			35.9%
Rs 15000-30,000	23.1%	2.6%	7.7%		5.1%			38.5%
Rs 30,000-45,000		2.6%	10.3%					12.8%
Rs 45,00-60,000								2.6%
Rs 75,000-90,000			2.6%					2.6%
More than 90000	2.6%	17.9%	28.2%		10.3%			7.7%
Total	43.6%	38.2%	51.1%		28.2%		10.3%	100.0%

Other than agriculture, wage labour is the second major occupation for the tribal groups including both Mundas (29.5%) and Sountis (20.5%) groups as the agriculture alone don't suffice to their consumption level (Table-3). Thakur (1986) pointed out that "Small landholdings and in many cases primitive methods of cultivation is responsible for low agricultural yields, which aren't adequate to sustain the tribal group throughout the year". Therefore, the tribal groups succumb to wage labour, to meet their day-to-day requirement. They often migrate to nearby district in search of jobs for two-three months after the harvesting is over. Some tribal groups also engage them in the Brick-work in the nearby village. The child being engaged in household work is more prevalent among the tribal counterpart more particularly among the Munda groups than the non-tribal counterpart in the village. Astonishingly, observation on the seventh day of visit by the researcher points out the same:

"On 13th November'2009, I was going through an unidentified village road to discuss with the household that were located at much distance. Suddenly, to my astonishment, I found just a six year old child going behind the cow. At first instance, I perceive, 'may be an elder child, looks to be a child from the distance'. As I approached him from the nearby, I found him Binay Munda, a class-II child. On Probing him, he told that he hasn't gone to the school because his parents aren't here and so, in the absence of them, it is his duty to graze the cattle' (Researchers' Field note).

Apart from agriculture and wage labour, the people in the village are engaged in business, government service and occupation like driving, brick-work etc. In these occupation, the non-tribal group (12.3%) and Sountis (18%) have a better representation than the Munda (2.6%) groups. There are people from Mahanta group, engaged as teacher, doctor, engineer, skilled technician, police service and also the people from Sounti group are in the profession of teachers but there are no people found from Munda group in such profession.

Land holdings and the Households

Land ownership is the major determinant of socio-economic differentiation has been well researched and documented. It has been crucial variable to determine income and employment around which both socio-economic deprivation or development revolve (Beteille, 1972, Mohanty, 2001³). While the large land owners belong to the upper castes, the cultivator belongs to middle class, the agricultural labourer's mostly belong to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes (Beteille, 1972). Thus, its unequal distribution helps maintain the hierarchical inequality and strengthen the basis of dominance of the privileged group by perpetuating inequality and deprivation in various spheres

Similar to findings of numerous studies, majority of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes have been disadvantaged in terms of landholdings.

While Mahantas (9 Percent) possess more than 5 acre land, there is no households from the tribal groups in the same category. In reverse, majority of the households from both the tribal group are relatively those with small holdings or with no land at all.

The feature of landlessness is found more among the Mundas(7%) than to Mahantas (5%). 61.3 per cent of Mundas and 43.6 percent Sountis are in the category of population having less than 1 acre of land, while only 3.5 percent of the Mahantas fall in this category. If we will combine the category of landholding into below or above the category of land-holding of 3 acres of land, the disparity is well-noticed between three ethnic groups. A large majority of population from Mundas (96%) and Sountis(89.7%) are having less than 3 acres of land or no land, but only 60 per cent of the Mahantas are in the category of households having less than 3 acres of land, a large gap of 36 per cent and 29.7 per cent respectively between Mundas and Sountis from Mahantas. On the other hand, a comparative assessment of social groups having more than 3 acres of land shows that highest proportion of Mahantas (18.5%) in this category than both the tribal groups, including Munda (4%) and Sounti (10.5%) groups. These figures highlight the dominance of non-tribal group (Mahantas) in terms of landholdings over the tribal groups(both Sounti and Munda) though Sountis are the original inhabitants of the village(Table-2)

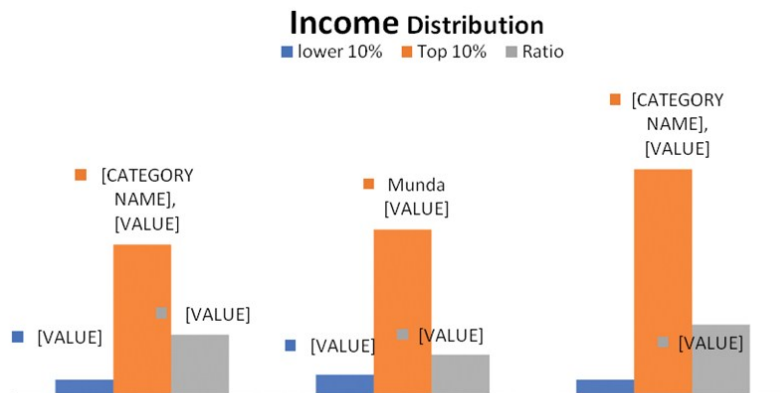
Table-2: Distribution of Social Groups by Income and Land Holdings

		Social group				
			Mahanta	Munda	Saunti	
Occupation	Agriculture	No. of households	50	51	24	125
		% within group	87.7%	68.0%	61.5%	73.1%
	Business	No. of households	3	0	0	3
		% within group	5.3%	.0%	.0%	1.8%
	wage labour	No. of households	0	22	8	30
		% within group	.0%	29.3%	20.5%	17.5%
	government service	No. of households	4	0	3	7
		% within group	7.0%	.0%	7.7%	4.1%
	Firewood collection	No. of households	0	1	0	1
		% within group	.0%	1.3%	.0%	.6%
	Others	No. of households	0	1	4	5
		% within groupP	.0%	1.3%	10.3%	2.9%
Total		No. of households	57	75	39	171
		% within group	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Though it was a historic fact that barter economy was prevalent among most of the tribe, still a few traces of barter economy is found among the tribal groups. There is some section of Mundas, who exchange labour among themselves and also food grains with section of non-tribal groups for farm-labour. The preference for exchange labour lies in the fact that they have the incapacity to pay labour and also in the fact that they prefer for collective work culture rather than an individualistic one.

Mahantas migrated to this village in one and half century ago but they have more control over land ownership than do their tribal counterpart, including both Mundas and Sountis. The Sountis and Mundas subsequently lost their land as a result of their incapability to repay the debt that they have borrowed from Mahantas.

The disparity is also echoed in the income and occupation among the social groups. About half of the population (49.1%) in the village are having income less than Rs 15,000 per annum, out of which 70.7 per cent of the total households are from Mundas and Sountis second the list with 35.9 per cent in the lower category of income. About the three-quarter of the households are within the annual income Rs 30,000 in the village, out of which 93.4 per cent and 74.4 per cent of the households are respectively from Mundas and Sountis, that clearly mark the sharp differences in the income distribution between both tribal and non-tribal group. Thus, it is clear that there is only meagre representation of Mundas in the higher income category in comparison to Mahantas and Sountis.(Table 2).



There is a clear divide between rich and poor across group. Not only inter-group but intra-group differences are also clearly marked in terms of income distribution among the households in the locality. As the above diagram indicates, the ratio in income between among lower 10 percent of the households to top 10 percent of households in case of Mundas (1:8) are less than that of Sounti(1:14) and Mahanta(1:12) groups. The gap in income between top 10 per cent and lower 10 per cent of population range from 27 per cent(Mahanta) to 42 per cent (Sounti) group of children and that of 29 per cent of gap between Munda groups. Thus, uneven distribution of income is the major characteristics found among all the groups. There is large gap in income found among the Sounti and Mahanta groups than Munda groups.

As per the findings, the households with small landholdings are the households with marginal income and returns but there is no proportional

relationship between the Households with large landholdings and their annual income (Table 2). There are 70.6 per cent of the Munda Households combined from the category of households having the land-holdings less than 1 acre of land and no land and among them, 67 per cent of the households earn less than Rs 30,000 and 41 per cent out of 43.6 per cent of the Sounti households from these category have the same earning. Among the Mahanta community, 7.1 per cent of the households has the income less than Rs 30,000, out of 8.8 per cent of the households combined from the households having land less than 1 acres. Thus, it shows a moderate relationship between small landholdings and marginal income and returns across the group. But the households having larger landholdings aren't the cases with higher income returns across the group except the Mahanta groups. There are 15.5 per cent of the households from Mahantas having the landholdings between 4-5 Acres of land and a large proportion (14 per cent) of the households earn more than Rs 30,000 to more than Rs 90,000. But the case is reverse in case of Munda and Sounti groups of households. While in the case of later, though 10.3 per cent of the households has the landholdings between 4-5 acres of land, majority (7.7 per cent) are having income less than 30,000 and in case of former, 4 per cent of the households have the same possession of land but their income level fall between the annual income less than Rs 15000. Perhaps It may be largely due to the ignorance to modern technology and inadequate support for more production from the agriculture..

Like other indicator, Munda groups (94.7%) score very poor in terms of household assets in comparison to other tribal ethnic group (87.7%) and non-tribal ethnic group (29.1%). About 24.6 per cent and 15.5 per cent of households are rich and very rich in household assets from Mahanta group while only 1.3 per cent of the households from Munda group are rich and very rich in household assets. The households with better socio-economic indicator has more household assets than those with lower socio-economic indicator¹(Shah, 1984). Table 3.3 shows that the households in the higher income category (Rs 75,000-Rs 90,000 and more than 90,000) are having better possession of household assets. But the social factor also count a much at the context. Even there are some cases where Mahanta groups with lower income are also in possession of more household assets than the households from tribal groups with similar kind of economic background. Even tribal groups with larger income do not possess much assets with them.

Credit facility and Debt.

In the village, whatever people earn either through cultivation or wage labour isn't sufficient and most of them are from the lower social category. The family expenditure proportional to familial income is very less except some affluent families in the village. As the table-4 indicates the difference between the mean of the total income and expenditure is modest ((Just less

than Rs 1000) in case of Munda group than Mahanta(more than Rs7,000) and Sounti group(more than Rs 9,000). Unplanned expenditure and large proportion of expenditure on liquors, rituals and festive occasions, are mainly account to the higher incidence of indebtedness among Munda group than to other group. The mean percentage of expenditure on liquor and rituals is higher among Munda(11%, 14%) groups than that of other Tribal(4%,13%) and non-tribal(Mahanta Group of households). In contrary, mean percentage of savings per households is also very low among Munda(5%)than do their other tribal(7%) and non-tribal counterpart(11%) of households(Table 3)

Table-3 Income and Household Assets

Groups			Income on Household Assets					Total
			Very Poor	Poor	Average	Rich	Very Rich	
Mahanta	Total income	Less than 15000	21.1	8.8				29.8
		Rs 15000-30,000	8.8	8.8		7.0		24.6
		Rs 30,000-45,000	3.5	5.3		10.5	14.0	33.3
		Rs 45,00-60,000		1.8		3.5		5.3
		Rs 6,0000-75,000			1.8	1.8		3.5
		More than 90000				1.8	1.8	3.5
	Total	33.3	24.6	1.8	24.6	15.8	100.0	
Munda	Total income	Less than 15000	70.7					70.7
		Rs 15000-30,000	22.7					22.7
		Rs 30,000-45,000	1.3	1.3				2.7
		Rs 6,0000-75,000			1.3			1.3
		More than 90000				1.3	1.3	2.7
	Total	94.7	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	100.0	
Sounti	Total income	Less than 15000	35.9					35.9
		Rs 15000-30,000	38.5					38.5
		Rs 30,000-45,000	10.3				2.6	12.8
		Rs 45,00-60,000	2.6					2.6
		Rs 75,000-90,000				2.6		2.6
		More than 90000				2.6	5.1	7.7
	Total		87.2			5.1	7.7	100.0

Shah(1984) observed that “Chaudhuris borrow money for social purposes and households expenditure like buying food grains, consumer goods, clothes and drinks etc.”. The case of family indebtedness is more or less found among all the groups of households but In comparison with non-tribal group (32%), large number of households from both the tribal group (Munda-77%, Sounti-64%) borrow from different sources. Mahanta and Sounti groups use multiple sources to get the loan but a sizeable majority from Munda group(86.5%) depend on money lender than other sources(Table 4).

Unlike both the non-tribal group(Mahanta) and other tribal group (Sounti), Munda group are little or never dependent on Bank or SHG⁴ to get the credit at the time of need. The factor underlying the consequence is that neither the Munda group has any Self-Help groups nor the SHG from other group lend them money. They find it difficult to get the loan from bank

because most of them have little land or no land to give security against the credit and partly because they have little knowledge about the bank. Shah in his restudy of Chaudhuri Tribe observed that “it was very difficult for the Chaudhuri households to get the loan because they have little land and because the officials from co-operative societies are dominated by upper strata of households in the locality. of more important, the fact is that large majority from Munda group continuously borrow from a single money-lender of a nearby village because their inability to repay the debt and partly because they believe that if they will go to other source, the money lender mayn't give the loan at other time. These households give rice at the time of harvesting against the debt at throwaway prices.

Table-4 Mean percentage of Income and Expenditure

Group		Income through employment	Income through agriculture	Income through business	Income through daily wages	Income through others	Total income	
Mahanta	Mean	11122.81	14143.86	1122.81	1771.93	8473.68	32684.21	
		34	43	3	5	26		
Munda	Mean	533.33	8306.67	0	5640	1306.67	17846.67	
		3	47	0	32	7		
Sounti	Mean	13820.51	11846.15	0	3256.41	2948.72	30487.17	
		45	39	0	32	10		
Total	Mean	7093.57	11059.65	374.27	3807.02	4070.18	25675.43	
		28	43	1	15	16		
Expenditure								
Group		Food	Medical	Rituals	Liquors	Savings purposes	Children expeniture	total
Mahanta	Mean	15613	1819	3354	646	2808	1191	25432
	%	61	7	13	3	11	5	
Munda	Mean	9419	1740	2460	2288	853	497	17257
	%	55	10	14	13	5	3	
Sounti	Mean	12859	2154	2195	764	1410	1823	21205
	%	61	9	10	4	7	9	
Total		12267	1861	2698	1393	1632	1031	20882
		59	9	13	7	8	5	

Sanatan Munda states, “*We have no other options left except going to single moneylender. If we will approach someone else, he (money lender gets to know the news and then, he comes to us and asks us to repay the loan as soon as possible. It also becomes difficult to get the loan in future*”

Munda group often take loan when they find it difficult to manage the family in providing square meal to the children, clothing at the festive occasion and on some social arrangements. on the other hand, most of the households from non-tribal group and more or less from the other tribal group(Sounti) take loan for productive purpose like cultivation, construction work and purchase of land etc. Formation of Self-Help Groups(SHG) is an advantage for both Mahanta and Sounti groups. Each of the group have two SHGs and it helps them to get the credit at less interest. Mundas have started SHG in their village but they couldn't able to run it because they were unable

to pay monthly thrift and many of the members from the group don't remain in the village for more than half a year as like most of the Mundas migrate to earn their livelihood.

The vicious circle of Ritual Activity, Migration and Poverty

Migration is caused by poverty and can also be a cause of poverty. But the context matters. Individuals and groups may remain chronically poor by adopting migration as a livelihood strategy or, alternatively, may benefit from migration and move out of chronic poverty⁵. However, migration also leads to betterment⁶.

In Tikaposi village, the characteristics of Migration is not uniform rather it has its different connotation for different groups. Mahanta, a non-tribal group of people less often migrate to cities in search of livelihood and the in-group migration are the rare characteristics among these people. It has been found that Individuals from Mahanta group with higher education and possibility of having a secure job most often migrate to cities. But the case is completely reverse among Munda, the tribal groups. The migration among Munda Tribal groups is mainly aimed at their survival. They were mainly responsive to economic opportunities available in the nearby district like Kendrapara, Balasore and Bhadrak during the month of October-June in each year and most of them are engaged in manual labour.

“Tuknu Munda, aged 28 has a wife, a son and a daughter. The children are never enrolled in School. They don't like to migrate but it is their compulsion to migrate since the agricultural work finishes by April. Since the harvest is very low, it wouldn't suffice their food requirements. Therefore, it was essential for them to visit nearby cities to earn some money by engaging all his family members in Cutting of crops. Even their children found to be engaged in the manual labour”.

The migrating behaviour of Munda tribes not only results from their incapacity to support their subsistence but the cultural practices from generation, somehow decide the fate of their migration. Till now, research confirmed that Spending money on a wedding as one of the most important investments villagers can make to ensure the continuity of their community¹. Although the spending money on the marriage of Munda Tribes is the unpopular practice, the expenditure on rituals and festivals push them to economically insecure position. As Table-5 shows Munda Tribe spend more than 27 per cent of their total income on consumption of liquors and celebration of rituals than comparative figure of 16 per cent and 14 per cent for Mahanta, the non-tribal group and Sounti, tribal group.

“Most of the Munda people return to the village during the month of January because not due to call of opportunity or traditional ties to land rather they want to celebrate Mage Porob with their group members. Again, they migrate after the festival is over because they have spent all their earnings

in celebrating the festivals”(Mahapatra,2010).

Table-5 Family Indebtedness among different groups

		Family indebtedness				Total	
		Money leader	Bank	SHG	Neighbourhood		
Groups	Mahanta	Count	11	9	1	3	24
		%within Group	45.8%	37.5%	4.2%		100.0%
	Munda	Count	58	7	0	2	67
		%within Group	86.6%	10.4	.0%	3.0%	100%
	Saunti	Count	14	4	5	2	25
		% within Group	56.0%	16.0%	20.0%	8.0%	100%
Total	Count	83	20	6	7	116	
	% within Group	71.6%	17.2%	5.2%	6.0%	100.0%	

The financial burden of the Munda family starts with the birth of a child. No doubt, they feel privileged to have a child but the burden of feasting their own community and villagers also burden them. It helps them to ensure the continuity of their community and co-operation among themselves. On the other hand, the non-performance of the rituals leads to sever consequences. Even the family concerned made isolated from other community members and villagers.

Eksia, is observed, in which most of the members from the village are invited to participate in the celebration and some village headman confer the name to the infant. Both the tribal group of people follow such custom while family member from Mahanta group themselves name their infants. There are some cases found in the village among Munda group that the infants are more than 1 years of age but the family members haven't given any name to the child. They cite, insufficient resource, as the main reason for their inability to host the occasion because they have to offer non-vegetarian food on such occasion, which is a burden for Munda families.(Mahapatra,2010)

While the non-fulfillment of immediate needs due to low socio-economic status encourages Munda tribal families for seasonal migration, frequent migration has also leave them very less options for future. With the surpassing years, the state has launched number of programmes for the benefit of the marginalized groups but still Munda tribes struggle to accrue benefit from it may be due to their instable nature of being in the locality. Often frequent migration of Munda tribe brought considerable changes to landownership in Tikaposi. Mahanta and Sounti group of people who are rich and politically dominant often acquired more lands and moved from being small to large landowners, whilst Munda group of people lost their land either due to temporary migration or permanent settlement in the place of migration.

Similarly, micro-credit organizations both public and private have emerged as the leading agency for loans. Emergence of Self-help groups has played a very prominent role in the empowerment of women and certainly in

the development of the particular region. Sounti and Mahanta groups of people benefit from the programmes due to their permanent settlement in the village unlike the Munda counterpart. Munda tribal groups have formed the Self-Help Group (SHG) but after a period of three months, the committee was dissolved. According to the Munda women who formed the Self-Help Group, *“They have started SHG in their village but they couldn’t able to run it because they were unable to pay monthly thrift and most of the members from the group don’t remain in the village for more than half a year as like most of the us migrate to earn their livelihood”*. But the seasonal migration promoted their perpetual indebtedness and they continue to depend upon the money lender for meeting their immediate needs when they return from the place of migration. Thus, the cycle of poverty continue to fence over the Munda families although the process of migration somehow fulfills their immediate needs.

Conclusion: Policy Implication for Future

The incidence of poverty, family indebtedness and migration is more found among Munda group of tribe, appears to be more as cultural occurrence rather than only an economic phenomenon, which has been rarely addressed by literature and practice. In other words, the process of migration among Munda tribe is the consequence of both cultural and economic phenomena. In the present study, it was found that compared to Sounti tribe and non-tribal Mahanta caste group, Munda group spend large part of their earnings on consumption of liquor, celebration of rituals and festivals. They largely migrate to nearby districts to earn for celebration of rituals and festivals. On contrary, the non-tribal and the other tribal people found to accord greater importance to save money and investing on education of their children, that has a larger value on their future prospects.

The dependence on multiple livelihood options for the poorest Tribal group can’t be ruled out but there is necessity to adopt people-friendly approaches to strengthen their economic status. Provision of the incentives and programmes in the government agenda doesn’t fulfill the target. Since most of them are illiterate and less informed about the policy and programmes for their upliftment, they neither approach nor anyone comes to them to resolve their problem. In the process, they rarely get benefit from the government sponsored programmes and projects and thus, lost the hope from these schemes and programmes sponsored by the state.

While the argument of the paper reveals that the cultural factor also influence the impoverishment of tribes because of high proportion of investment from their income. If they might have spent the similar amount of expenditure on the education of their children or for productive assets, it might have been beneficial on long term basis. Therefore, a mechanism of guidance and counselling needs to be placed for the poorest tribal group, where the process

of migration is inbuilt in the mindset of these underprivileged tribal groups.

Notes

1. The Head count ratio (HCR) is the proportion of a population that exists, or lives, below the poverty line.
2. Béteille has discussed about the relationship between the caste structure, the class system and the distribution of political power through his fieldwork in Sripuram in Thanjavur District, Tamil Nadu.
3. See (Mohanty 2001).
4. A self-help group (SHG) is a village-based financial intermediary committee comprises a group of micro entrepreneurs having homogeneous social and economic backgrounds, all voluntarily coming together to save regular small sums of money, mutually agreeing to contribute to a common fund and to meet their emergency needs on the basis of mutual help.
5. See Kothari (2002).
6. See Skeldon (2003) Migration And Poverty. Paper presented at the conference on “African Migration and Urbanization in Comparative Perspective, Johannesburg, South Africa, June 4 – 7, 2003.

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