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**STATUS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND
INEQUALITY AMONG THE WEAVER GROUPS OF
BARGARH DISTRICT IN ODISHA**

Abstract

The Human Development Reports of the UNDP has brought a paradigm change in the concept of human development and its measurement. The composite human development index (HDI) and the indices therein are widely accepted for social attainment prosperity for nations, states, districts, and even communities. Although the initial HDI was conceptualized in 1990, there have been several modifications in the formulation of the index. The literature shows the use of the HDI to various groups such as class, ethnicity, religion, caste, etc., which are very much important and relevant in the context of globalization. Apart from studying human development as a whole, this index also helps to determine the access to and control over economic, political, and cultural resources to a great extent. The status and interaction between different groups and their social identity based on caste and ethnicity can also be linked to this index. The disparities are the consequences of a historical and structured hierarchy, and inequalities in power and social status among the diverse groups can also be seen through this index. In this paper, we present the inter-caste disparities in human development, with the help of two indices, viz. the HDI and the Inequality-Adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI) among the four weaver caste groups in the state of Odisha. For this empirical study, both primary and secondary data were collected based on fieldwork in the Barpali block of Bargarh district of Odisha. To estimate the HDI and the IHDI among these groups, we calculated the health index, the educational attainment index, and the standard of the living index separately for each group. Concerning the inter-caste disparity among these groups, we also observed a difference in their human development status, especially between the lower caste groups and higher caste groups. The result justifies the UNESCO's declaration of the "World Decade for Cultural Development" that -- "Development is culture-specific." Hence, culture-specific development strategies should be adopted to minimize the prevailing inequality within and among the groups.

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Keywords: *Culture, Human Development, Caste Groups, Inequality*

Received: 2th July 2019

Revised: 2th April 2020

Accepted: 6th April 2020

Introduction

The Human Development Reports (HDRs) of the UNDP in the form of several indices have brought about a paradigm shift in the concept of human development. These indices emphasized the outcomes of human development by calculating not only the income dimension but also the quality of peoples' wellbeing. It reflected the fact that although higher per capita income is a prerequisite factor for human development, only a rise in income may not provide all the necessities which people need for their development. The need to focus on human concerns was aided by the theoretical inputs of Amartya Sen and his central concept of promoting 'human capabilities' (1989). In his view, the living standard of a society should be judged by the peoples' capabilities to lead the lives they value. Communities should be seen as ways of enhancing such capabilities as health, knowledge, self-respect, and the ability to participate actively in community life. In other words, the core of human well-being is the freedom of choice, and hence the expansion of human capabilities implies greater freedom of choice so that people can explore a wider range of options that they find worthwhile (Anand and Sen 1994, 1996). In this context, Mahbub-Ul-Haq (1995) viewed, "For long, the recurrent question is how much was a nation producing? Increasingly, the question comes to mind as, how they were faring? Income is one of the options and is a significant one, but it is not the sum-total of human life. Health, education, physical environment, and freedom may be just as important". With this change in perspective, human development began to be measured in terms of new evaluative criteria of human life-longevity, knowledge and decent living standard- and estimated through Human Development Index (HDI). In 1990, the UNDP published the first HDR, wherein it presented a new way of measuring human progress in the form of a Human Development Index (HDI) for ranking countries in terms of their HDI in terms of longevity, knowledge and standard of living. Today, the HDI is also used as an indicator of social attainment and prosperity. However, the original HDI proposed by the UNDP has been modified several times.

The application of the HDI to various groups such as class, ethnicity, religion, caste, etc. is very much important and relevant in the present-day context of globalization. But limited instances are found for social groups in various HDRs. However, some countries like Malaysia, Gabon, Nepal, USA, Canada, Guatemala, and India have calculated the HDI according to social groups. For instance, the UNDP and Asian Development Bank (ADB) published the Nepal Human Development Report, 2008, and the Report on Ethnic and the Caste Diversity for Poverty and Inclusive Development in Nepal 2005 to estimate the HDI by caste and ethnicity. Similarly, in the HDR for Malaysia, the HDI was worked out separately for Chinese, Indian, and Malay ethnic

groups (Borooh et al. 2013, Kulkarni 2002). The government of India also initiated the preparation of the National Human Development Reports (NHDRs) as well as similar reports for individual states. The first NHDR was prepared in 2001, and around 17 states have released their State human Development Reports (SHDRs). Although both national and state HDRs have dealt with dimensions of human development in relation to the disadvantaged groups like SCs, STs, and OBCs, these exercises are confined to only disaggregating the individual indicators of human development and poverty in a selective manner without estimating the composite index of human development or human poverty for these social groups. The indicators used to disaggregate data by social groups vary from state to state, depending on the availability of data. There is also limited discussion and developing indicators on conceptualizing caste and ethnicity-based exclusion and discrimination of disadvantaged groups. Very few studies have also been done to measure development or deprivation for social groups in their cultural contexts, viz., by Sarkar, Mishra, and Nathan (2006), Sengupta (2009), Thorat and S. Venkatesan (2014), Motiram and Naraparaju (2015), etc. In the meantime, human development cannot be achieved fully without considering inequality.

To understand poverty, Marshall (1926) has long back analyzed how markets priced skills and studied the role of human capital in creating capacity and inequality. He also stressed the role of the family, especially that of the mother, in creating human capabilities. According to Cunha and Heckman (2007), “preferences and skills determined early in life explain a substantial part of lifetime inequality.” For example, recent research shows that in American society, about 50% of lifetime inequality in the present value of earnings is determined by factors known to agents at age 18. These factors originate in the family and include genes and the environments that families select and create. Thus, the case for considering inequality in the evaluation of human development is relevant and also a well-known critique for per capita GDP as an indicator of social welfare (Foster et al. 2005). Further, the prevalent caste and ethnic diversity in India is a well-accepted source of inequality.

In India, the consumer expenditure from the National Sample Survey is used as the estimate of inequality. The rural area sees inequality of consumption lesser than urban areas. On the other hand, inequality of income in urban areas is smaller than in rural areas. Literature in this area shows that India is one of the highly unequal countries in the world (Chakravarty 2016; Chancel and Piketty 2017). Again, inequality between social groups in India reveals an ethnic dimension to it. Hence, it points out that human development does not only depend upon access to facilities and productive abilities but also on the opportunities available. The crucial issue, however, is not only disparities in poverty and the HDI but also social identity based on caste and ethnicity, which, to a great extent, determines access to and control over economic, political, and cultural resources, and thereby status and

interaction between different groups. There is a broad convergence between income, wealth, and the HDI, on the one hand, and social and cultural identities on the other. These disparities are the consequences of a historical and structured hierarchy and inequality in power and social status among the diverse social, cultural, linguistic, and religious groups, and of poverty and non-inclusive development (Pradhan and Sherstha 2005). Looking at the inequality dimension, the UNDP (2010) implemented the inequality-adjusted human development index (IHDI) based on the work of Alkire and Foster (2010). In view of the above model, Suryanarayana et al. (2016) estimated the inequality-adjusted human development for the Indian states. However, there is no such work in the literature that focuses on this aspect based on social groups.

Although the concept of HDI and IHDI was introduced primarily to measure human development at a macro-level, the application of this concept has also attracted development anthropologists to a great extent. A generalized model of the HDI was developed by Mangaraj and Upali (2020) by integrating the shortfall dimension with attainment. Jason Hickel, an economic anthropologist at Goldsmith University London and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, developed a sustainable development index by measuring the ecological efficiency of human development in the Anthropocene (Hickel, 2020). Apart from these macro-level applications, there is a need for the use of these types of indicators at “micro-level,” particularly to castes and communities for analysing cultural consequences. In this paper, we deal with the cultural dimension of development as proposed by UNESCO in its “World Decade for Cultural Development (UNESCO, 1995) for four different weaver groups in Odisha. As culture forms the basis for any development strategy, the analysis of human development from the cultural point of view is very much necessary to design culture-specific development strategies (Upali, 1994; Mangaraj, 2000; Mangaraj and Upali, 2010, Shoham and Malul, 2013; Maridal, 2013; Tambovtsev, 2015; Scott et al., 2018; Mosse, 2018). In this context, Human development measures, such as HDI and IHDI in small communities and caste groups, open multiple perspectives to link these measures to their respective cultures for the development of development programmes and projects.

The present paper measures the HDI and the IHDI for four caste groups in a weaving community of Baragarh district of the state of Odisha. The objective of the study is to know the status of human development as well as the inequality in different caste groups staying in the same place and attached to the same occupational pattern. As each caste group has a distinct cultural pattern, the way of life in general and resource utilization, in particular, is very much dependent on its knowledge base, beliefs, value system, etc. Hence, by measuring human development across these groups, we try to validate the UNESCO’s declaration on “Cultural Dimension on Development” that development is very much dependent on culture and a cultural approach is also necessary for endogenous development.

Caste and Ethnicity-based Exclusion and Discrimination in India

Social exclusion is the denial of equal opportunities imposed by certain groups on others, countering in the inability of an individual to participate in the basic political, economic, and social functioning of the society. Haan (1997) gives two defining characteristics of social exclusion – there is a denial of equal opportunity in multiple spheres, and it is embedded in the societal relations and societal institutions. Thus, societal exclusion has a considerable impact if social interactions occur between groups in a power-subordinate relationship. The focus on social group recognizes the importance of social relations in the analysis of poverty and inequality (Buvnic 2005). Sen (2000) differentiates between active and passive exclusion, the former being the deliberate exclusion of people from opportunity through government policy or other means while in the latter, there is no deliberate attempt to exclude, nevertheless, may result in exclusion from a set of circumstances.

In India, exclusion revolves around societal interrelations and institutions that exclude, discriminate, isolate, and deprive some groups on the basis of their identity like caste and ethnicity (Thorat and Louis 2003). Essentially, caste is a system of social and economic governance and organization of production and distribution that is governed by customary rules and norms which are unique and distinct (Akerlof 1916; Scoville 1991, 1996; Lal 1988; Ambedkar 1936; 1987). It is based on civil, cultural, and economic rights, which are ascribed at birth and made hereditary. It implied “forced exclusion” and discrimination, especially in the economic sphere such as occupation, labour, employment, etc. which is internal to the system, and a necessary outcome of its governing principles is a market economy. Thus, this practice not only involves the failure of access and entitlements to economic rights but also cultural and political rights. It involves what is described by UNDP as “living mode exclusion” (HDR 2004). Hence, caste, untouchability, and ethnicity-based exclusion reflect the inability of individuals and groups like *Dalits*, *Adivasis*, and similar groups to interact freely and productively with others and to take part in the full economic, social and political life of the community (Bhalla and Lapeyre 1997).

In many South Asian countries, including India, Srilanka, and Nepal, we find caste and ethnic diversities as a large part of social stratification. While castes are hierarchically structured in terms of ritual purity, the ethnic groups are more egalitarian in their social structure. Based on historical perspective, caste does not come under the purview of economic planning (Jodhka, 2016) and is viewed as a network process (Witsoe, 2017), which connects interactions at micro-level to structural outcomes at macro-level. Shah et al. (2018) argue that the caste identity that contributes to poverty cannot be seen independently. Some studies reveal that caste identity creates disparities in opportunities at every level. Among the caste-structured groups, there is a fundamental division between the ritually ‘pure’ castes and the ‘untouchable’ castes. The latter is

now known as Dalits, and many ethnic groups, influenced by the Hindu ideology, considered them as untouchables. In other words, the division between Dalits and all other groups is as fundamental as the division between caste-structured Hindus. In this context, the study of Carswell et al. (2017) finds that, when non-Dalits are more likely to find themselves in the skilled tailoring jobs, the Dalit workers are in the low-skilled dirty, dying units. Hence, the effects of castes are not locationals; rather, they find themselves where “cultural and social relations play out” (Das, 2008). It led Mosse (2018) to suggest that there is a need for policy innovation to address market and non-market discriminations, especially in the informal and private sectors. To ensure that caste has its proper place in the global development policy debate, a developmental measure approach can help in placing different caste groups in a specific order for appropriate culture-specific development interventions.

The Caste and Ethnic Diversity among the Weaver Groups: A Case Study in Odisha

The four weaver groups in the study area are diverse in their culture, rituals, history, and they belong to their respective positions in the social hierarchy based on their ritual purity since pre-independence times. After Independence, these groups were fitted into the reservation categories of the successive Governments. Three main features of these groups are their diversity, structural hierarchy, and inequality. Each of them has a distinct historical origin, occupational specialization, and societal norms. Among these four groups, the Gandas are a Scheduled Caste and are distributed over the entire western Odisha, especially in the districts of Bargarh, Sambalpur, Sundergarh, Kalahandi, Kandhamal and Balangir working as weavers, village watchman, musicians and messengers (Patnaik and Mohanty 1983). In recent years, their traditional weaving skills as an occupational pursuit have declined with the introduction of sophisticated mill-made clothes. Some of them have switched over to agricultural labourers, manual wage-earners, and few of them have even migrated to nearby urban and industrial settings in search of livelihood. However, despite several challenges, a few households continue to weave. In the villages, they are treated as impure and untouchable among their Hindu neighbours and live in separate wards or hamlets called Gandapada or Ganda basti at the outskirts of the main settlement in the multi-caste villages. Harihar Vibhar, a Ganda weaver, told me that,

For many generations, we are staying in this hamlet with our Jati members (Caste group). We have neither land in the village nor any one of us interested in going from this place. Here we have enough free space to do our thread processing works. We are never interested in staying inside the village among higher caste groups as we will feel isolated there and will face discrimination in daily life. Here we are living together and always helping each other.

According to the Orissa district Gazetteers, Sambalpur (1971: 119): “The Gandas weave coarse clothes and generally act as village watchman till recently. They also work as professional pipers and drummers and are employed as musicians in marriage ceremonies. Economically they are very backward and also lack the skill of cultivation”.

Traditionally the Kulis were forest dwellers in Chottanagpur plateau and were residing in Surguja and Gangpur princely states of India. During the regime of king Baram Dev of Sambalpur, Odisha, they were brought to Sambalpur for making cotton wicks, which were required for the traditional lighting system as well as to weave small pieces of clothes needed for worship and different rituals. Over time, the Kulis was trained to weave low budget and coarse clothes for the common man. To encourage them, the King gave them the title of ‘Meher.’ The post-independence decline in the demand for handloom led some of them to engage in cultivation and daily wage labour. The Census of India, 1931, mentions Kulis as Hindu caste weavers while in the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Lists (Modification order, 1956), the Kulis was listed as the Scheduled Caste as well as Scheduled Tribe. The Government of Odisha’s Order in 2002 has enlisted the Kulis as a Scheduled Tribe. At present, the caste reservation of the Kulis is a matter of jurisdiction. Mitranvanu Meher, aged 51 years narrated:

We Kulis are facing lots of problems with our caste reservation. The Government is neither treating us as SCs nor STs. For my son’s graduation admission, I faced a lot of problems with his caste certificate. The Babu (Government Officer) in the Tehsil office told me to get permission from the High court for this certificate. I do not have enough money to file a case in the High Court for an order. Further, the court is in Cuttack, which is far away from my home to fight for a caste certificate legally. Although our “Caste Mancha (association)” is fighting for this issue for the last 20 years, the Tehsil Babus in Barapali are not issuing us certificates.

Historical evidence shows that around two hundred years ago, the Bhulia and Kosta weaving-caste communities were brought by king Ramaidev of Chauhan dynasty, who ruled the erstwhile princely state of Patnagarh (now in Balangir district) from Dhanwantari in Chattisgarh (Meher 1977). After his death, his elder son remained in Patnagarh, while his younger son, Baram Dev, built a new capital at Sambalpur and shifted some families of Bhulias and Kosta weavers. Both communities were experts in weaving textiles in cotton silk with a robust inter-community interaction between them. They are very artistic and specialized in the “tie and dye” or “Ikat” weaving process using both geometric and floral designs. The Kosta people are experts with Tussar silk weaving, whereas the Bhulias are “tie and dye” specialists and work with cotton for designing sarees and other fabrics of high quality.

All four ethnic groups speak Odia language with a typical Sambalpuri

dialect, which is the local dialect of western Odisha. They can also speak Hindi and use some Hindi words in their vocabulary while talking amongst themselves. But all the groups have their caste-specific dialectical form except the Gandas. All settlements have houses arranged in linear rows facing each other with a common central street road. Both concrete and mud houses with a varying number of rooms are found according to their economic status. However, a small verandah of variable size is very much prevalent in front of every house used for different activities of thread processing and dyeing and open into the loom shed locally called "Manga Ghara." The living style of all weavers is very simple, and they wear locally produced handloom fabrics. However, in recent years, fancy and cheaper mill-made clothes are attracting the younger generations, though the elders still prefer to use handloom clothes. The youth are also using handlooms on special occasions. The usual clothing of men consists of dhoti or lungi, either handloom or mill-made, pant, and shirt. Their women counterparts mostly use sarees, and the young girls wear kameez with churidar or salwar. Nowadays, jeans, vests, half pants, trousers, etc. are also common among young boys. New clothes are worn on ritual and festive occasions like birth rites, puberty rites, marriage ceremonies, Nuakhai, Sital Sasthi, etc. Besides these common festivals, for caste specific festivals, viz., the Karma Sani puja among the Kulis; Laxmi puja among the Bhulias, and Kostas; and Pusa Punei among the Gandas, the respective caste group wears new clothes. Chaitanya Mahananda, a Ganda daily wage labourer, narrated me as:

"Pusa Punei is a grand and main festival in this locality. Historically, it is an agricultural festival primarily meant to celebrate and rejoice the joys of leisure after the harvest of paddy. Thus, mainly the labour class people like me enjoy this festival more in comparison to the other caste groups. The festival is held on the last day of the Odia month, Pausa (December-January). On this day, the head of the family worships the deities and the ancestral spirits by offering cooked foods and animal sacrifices. All the family members wear new dresses, visit their friends and relatives and spend the day with delicious dishes and drinks. My Maalik (employer) gives us money to celebrate this day".

The womenfolk of these weavers in all the caste groups are fond of wearing ornaments. During social and religious ceremonies, they adorn themselves with various kinds of ornaments, mostly made of metals like gold, silver, aluminum, or an alloy of silver and brass and other cheap materials. Nowadays, they are also using cheaper ornaments made of plastic, beads, and glass. The daily household materials used by them include new items to a great extent, including their tools for weaving. Earlier, they were using mostly earthen pots and brass utensils, But nowadays, one would find their utensils made of aluminum, steel, iron, and plastic materials. They all are also very fond of using modern consumer durables like mobile phones, television, washing machine, refrigerator vehicles, etc. according to their financial status.

Rice is their staple food and is the largest single item of their daily meals. Boiled rice is taken throughout the year, either hot or soaked in water. Different items of cooked vegetables, fish, or meat are taken with rice, the variety, and quantity of which depends on one's economic condition. But all of them are very fond of non-vegetarian food items. However, there is no specific ritual associated with food except some norms regarding entry into the kitchen. The kitchen is considered as a sacred place as it is the seat of their ancestral spirits as well as Goddess *Mahalaxmi*, the goddess of wealth and fortune. No one except the family members enters the kitchen. There is a social and moral restriction among weavers for drinking alcohol, except for the Gandas where liquor is considered auspicious and used in all ritual occasions.

Childhood socialization among the weavers plays a very dominant role in shaping their adult social behavior. When the child attains 3 to 4 years of age, he/she gets mentally and physically trained to honour and obey the elders. The child's technical education also begins at the same time. Children learn the weaving techniques from their parents and elders both by imitation and training. The parents teach their children the art of counting threads, pulping, warping, and winding yarns in the spindle as well as the working of the loom. Thus, the children render substantial help and assistance to their parents in different weaving operations along with their studies in schools.

Puberty rituals are observed among the girls who follow certain restrictions and taboos. The marriage ceremony is the most significant event in the weaver's life. It is an occasion of unprecedented give and takes, exchange of gifts, feasts, and acquisition of the bride, thus adding to the economic status of the groom's family. The weaving knowledge of the bride is considered as a pre-condition for marriage-fixing, especially among the Kostas and the Bhulias. Ramesh Chandra Meher, an elderly man, belonging to the Kosta caste narrated to me as:

During the marriage-fixing of our son, we strictly followed the caste endogamy and clan exogamy pattern of our tradition. We also asked the parents of the bride, whether she has the working knowledge regarding weaving processes and associated techniques or not. Because if she has the working knowledge, then she will pick up our family livelihood easily and quickly. As weaving is our family livelihood, she can also contribute to our family income. After the marriage, our daughter-in-law is doing well in weaving and supporting us, along with doing her household chores.

All these four communities have variable numbers of clan patterns. The Kosta, the Bhulias, and the Kulis and the Bhulias are identified with 150, 80, and 20 clans, respectively (Meher, 2011; Mohapatra, 2012). The clans are exogamous, and marriage is strictly prohibited within the same clan. The Gandas are divided into several exogamous descent groups or sects locally called "Barga," whose members consider themselves to be the descendants from a common mythical ancestor.

In addition to their association with statutory panchayats and municipalities, every weaver group has its respective traditional caste panchayat to handle its internal affairs and safeguard the interests of its caste group. The respective caste organization at the village level act as the guardian of social control, custodian of the socio-cultural values, while preserving the identity of the caste group in the social hierarchy. The head-man of each caste group represents at the regional level and also gets invitation as a guest of honour to all social ceremonies and rituals during the wedding, death, seasonal feasts, and festivals.

Economically, these four groups are distinct from each other concerning the type of works they do and their associated economic pursuit. All the Gandas are low caste weavers who weave coarse clothes to meet the local needs, and most of them work for master weavers on a wage basis. The Kulis also do the same type of job as the Gandas do. Most of the Kuli families take orders from the Bhulias, and prepare clothes of both long and short types and are paid accordingly. Mangulu Vibhar, a Ganda weaver, told me:

I am earning Rs. 4000/- to 5000/- per month from weaving. Sudhir Meher of Barapali is my Maalik (employer). I weave only sarees. He gives me the raw materials, and my work is only to weave sarees for him. To complete one Saree, I take 3 to 4 days, and for one saree, I get Rs. 300. My mother and wife are also helping me in this regard. They do all the thread processing works. At the time of emergency, my Maalik never refuses to give me money in advance. So I always do his works on a priority basis, and in the future also I will work for him.

The Kosta and the Bhulias weave cotton, tussar (silk), and cotton-silk-mixed clothes with sophisticated and artistic designs. These type of sarees are widely accepted throughout the country and fetch high prices. Although the four weaver caste groups live side by side in the same area, they do not infringe upon each others' caste prerogatives. Once the 'Barapali Village Service'— an internationally staffed technical assistance project made a sincere attempt for the Ganda weavers to adopt superior weaving skills. Still, the monopolistic nature of the caste guilds stood in the way (Pattnaik and Mohanty 1983). However, all the weavers observe certain rituals for the prosperity of their weaving occupation in general. The loom gets worshipped on festive occasions like Rakhi Purnima, Dussera, and Laxmi Puja. People tie Rakhis around the looms in Rakhi Purnima. On those days, the loom, its shed, the floor, and the surroundings get cleaned and purified. All the activities relating to weaving and operations of the loom find suspended on these festive days.

Different types of threads are used for their products. They are mainly the cotton threads, silk threads, and tusser threads or a mix-up of any two types of threads. The threads also are of different qualities and are numbered as 60, 62, 65, 70, etc. as per their fineness. Accordingly, the techniques also

differ, and so even the product. The whole weaving process includes many sub-processes, and a particular caste group excels in specific sub-process. For the tussar and silk products, the Kosta caste group has the expertise, and they maintain their weaving secrets. Likewise, the Kosta group knows a specific domain in this context perfectly and accordingly got their caste name as per their knowledge. They used to boil the silkworm (locally known as *Kosa*) to extract the tussar thread for weaving. The process of making thread was also technically challenging to get a good quality of threads because the worm needed to be killed inside the *Kosa*. So as they deal with the *Kosa*, they got their caste name as Kosta, which is continuing to date.

The Bhulia weavers excel in the sub-process dealing with cotton thread products. They have a different style of “tie-dye” process (locally known as *Bandha*) of threads. The specialty of the *Bandha* technique is that the motifs and designs are pre-determined before the colouring the thread. Thus, while weaving, the specific motifs are drawn automatically on sarees in different colours. So the whole weaving process includes twisting the threads, tying and dyeing according to design, and finally fixed with loom for weaving. To produce different products like sarees, bed-cover, dress material, handkerchief, towel, etc., the *Bandha* process is most important, which is also technically very difficult and is the specialty of the Bhulia people. Many of the Bhulia people also make money only by doing the *Bandha* and sell it to other caste groups. From the Bhulia population under the study, 52.5% earn their livelihood only by doing “tie-dye” activities irrespective of their gender and age. Hence, it can be considered as their particular caste-based skill, and this secret is restricted to them only.

Moreover, apart from the differences that exist in their skills for the weaving process among the four groups, other cultural differences also prevail in their rituals, festivals, food patterns, marriages, etc. The level of income, as well as other forms of social inequality, is very much prevalent among the four groups. On the whole, the disparity in opportunities is one of the significant factors affecting the capabilities of younger generations, especially among the Gandas and the Kulis.

The Data Sources and Methodology

For this empirical study, both primary and secondary data were collected by conducting fieldwork in the Barpali block of Bargarh district of Odisha. Bargarh is the westernmost district of the state Odisha which was carved out of erstwhile Sambalpur district. In this district, in addition to agriculture, weaving as an occupational pursuit is very much predominant among the people. For our study, we have taken the Barapali Notified Area Council (NAC) area where the three different weaver groups, viz., Bhulia, Kosta, and Kuli, reside adjunct to each other in three hamlets. All the households of Bhuliapada, Kostapada, and Kulipada comprise of ward nos. 4,

5, and 6 of the Barpali NAC. The Ganda Sahi of Mahulpalli village of Barpali was also taken as another field site where the Ganda weavers reside, which is about just 5 k.m. from the Barapali NAC. These four groups practice traditional weaving as their primary occupation. A total number of 386 households were surveyed for data collection, which included 200 Bhulias, 87 Kostas, 47 Kulis, and 55 Ganda households, respectively. The demography of the total population is presented in Table 1. Primary data were collected by using the census schedule and interview guides. As the study was limited to a small area and population, individual household data were collected to guarantee reliability and validity, and to capture the inequalities across the households.

To estimate the HDI and IHDI among the four groups of weavers, the Health Index (HI), Educational Attainment Index (EAI), and Standard of Living Index (SLI) were calculated separately for each group. For calculating the HI, child longevity, institutional deliveries, and the ante-natal and post-natal care were taken as the parameters for describing the health care status of the people, as it is difficult to calculate the life expectancy at the individual level. The data were collected from the respective Anganwadi centers and also were further verified with the collected data using an interview guide. The EAI is mainly the mean year of schooling of the adult population. In this study, the average literacy rate and the combined enrolment index (primary school, high school, and college) were used to calculate the EAI. The data were collected from every household regarding literacy and enrolment. Further, these data were verified with the data collected from the schools and colleges in this area for the enrolment status of the studied population. Similarly, the Per Capita Purchasing Power (PPP) is taken as the measure for calculating the living standard of the people. But at the individual level, it is difficult to get such statistics. So, in our study, we calculated the SLI in a two-factor procedure, e.g., the per capita income of the people from their primary income source (weaving) and the infrastructure of the household they owned. The data for both the parameters were obtained at the household level by using semi-structured interview guides and the household census schedule.

The HDI for the Four Weaver Groups

The calculation of HDI is done similar to that of the HDR(2010) of UNDP using geometric mean. We calculate it individually for each of the caste groups considering three basic dimensions of human development, i.e., health care, educational attainment, and standard of living. These indices are calculated as follows:

1. **Health-care Index (HI):** This index is constructed based on Child Longevity Index (CLI), Institutional Delivery Index (IDE), Ante-natal Care Index (ACI), and Post-natal Care Index (PCI). As all the pregnant women irrespective of the four ethnic groups in the studied area took the facilities of ante-natal care and post-natal care from the local

hospitals and dispensaries in the last three years, the value of IDE and PCI become same for all the groups. So we calculate HI based on two factors only as:

$$HI = \frac{(CLI+IDI)}{2}, \text{ where}$$

CLI: Ratio of live children to the total number of children below five years of age;

IDI: Ratio of the total number of institutional deliveries of pregnant women to the total number of women who delivered.

Table-2 shows the values of CLI, IDI as well as HI for all the four caste groups.

2. Educational Attainment index (EAI): We calculate it as:

$$EAI = 2/3 (\text{Total Literacy Index}) + 1/3 (\text{Enrolment Index})$$

where the actual percentage is taken as 74.62% for Bhulia and Kosta group based on the literacy rate of Bargarh district. For the Kuli group it is taken as 64.86% as it is the literacy rate of the ST population in Bargarh district. For Ganda caste group, it is taken as 68.43% as it is the literacy rate of the SC population of Bargarh district as per the 2011 census.

(i) Enrolment index (EI): $\frac{(PEI + HEI + CEI)}{3}$; where

where Primary Enrolment Index (PEI): $\frac{(\text{Actual value} - \text{Minimum value})}{(\text{Maximum value} - \text{Minimum value})}$;

- The actual value is the total number of students enrolled in primary school from the respective caste groups.
- The maximum value is the total number of children in the age group 5 to 10 of the respective caste group.
- The minimum value is the literacy rate of the respective caste groups.

Similarly, the High School Enrollment Index (HEI) and the College Enrollment Index (CEI) are also calculated. The data set based on which the EI is calculated for the groups, and the result is shown in Table no.3 and 4, respectively.

3. Standard of Living Index (SLI): We calculate it as:

2/3 (per capita income index) + 1/3 (infrastructural index), where

Per capita income index: $\frac{(\text{Actual income} - 1000)}{(18648 - 1000)}$

where,

- The actual income of a caste group is its total income from weaving divided by its total population.
- 18648 is the per capita income in rupees for the Bargarh district.
- 1000 is taken as the minimum income for the same district.

The per capita income index is shown in table 5. Likewise, we compute the Combined Infrastructural Index (CII) as:

$CII = (\text{Infra index 1} + \text{Infra index 2} + \text{Infra index 3})/3$; where

- Infrastructure 1: the availability of either Television or refrigerator or both.
- Infrastructure 2: the availability of either motorbike or car or both.
- Infrastructure 3: the facilities of either latrine or bathroom or both.

The Infrastructural index value is the ratio of the number of households with the said facilities to the total number of households for respective caste groups. The CII and the SLI indices are calculated and shown tables .6 and Table 7, respectively. The results reveal that the two caste groups, viz., the Kuli, and the Ganda, are opposite to their other two counterparts Bhulia and Kosta.

Finally, the Human Development Index is calculated and shown in Table8 as per the method discussed above.

Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI)

As an extension to HDI, the IHDI is a new measure to calculate the level of human development in a society, which accounts for inequality in all the dimensions of the HDI. In comparison to the HDI, the IHDI takes into account not only the average achievements of people on three dimensions but also how those achievements are distributed among the citizens (Alkire and Foster 2010). So, it reduces each dimension's average value according to its level of inequality. The IHDI is built on the basis of Atkinson's (1970) well-known concept of "equally distributed equivalent" (EDE) achievements. Accordingly, the IHDI will be equal to the HDI when there is no inequality between people, and it will fall as inequality is more. The IHDI directly links inequalities in each dimension of the HDI to the resulting loss in human development. Thus it can help inform policies towards inequality reduction and assists in evaluating their impact. As this paper is based on different caste groups, we also calculate the IHDI along with the HDI for each of the caste groups, which will help to know their relative human development status for designing suitable policy guidelines (Suryanarayana et al. 2011).

For measuring inequality in the population under study, first, the inequality adjustment factor (F_x) is calculated by taking the ratio of the geometric and arithmetic means of the three variables, viz., health, education, and standard of living. The inequality-adjusted dimension indices (I_x) are obtained by multiplying the HDI dimensions with the respective adjustment factors F_x . Finally, the IHDI of four different caste groups are calculated by taking the geometric mean of the three inequality-adjusted dimensional indices. The calculated IHDI is presented in Table 9. Further, the dimensionwise percentage loss due to inequality is also calculated and shown in Tables 10, 11, and 12. We denote H_1 , E_1 , and S_1 as human development in health, education, and standard of living dimensions, respectively. Similarly, H_2 , E_2 , and S_2 represent the corresponding inequality-adjusted indices. In Table 13, the results of both HDI and IHDI for the different caste groups are shown. It is noticed that there is a big gap in human development when inequality is adjusted. The ranking of the caste groups, viz., the Bhulia, and the Kosta, also got changed. Finally, the percentage loss in HDI due to inequality is also calculated, which shows the significant impact of inequality among the Gandas.

Discussion

The two caste groups, viz, Kuli, and Ganda have lower attainments in educational attainment as well as the standard of living as per Table 7. Similarly, the percentage loss (35%) of the Ganda caste group illustrates that there is significant inequality in the Ganda caste group compared to the other three. Due to the lack of artistic skill among them till today, they are in the clutch of a Jajmani system in the handloom sector. As discussed earlier, they are working as handloom labour for other caste groups and are the most vulnerable population having inequality both socially and economically. However, this prevailing situation has been continuing for generations as a consequence of the occupational rigidity of our caste system. Although the overall HDI of this group is little less than others, a high degree of inequality exists for this group, and they are far behind the other groups in this dimension. It is very much evident from the fact that both these groups are placed lower in the social hierarchy than the other two groups. This discrimination has resulted in lesser opportunities for more profitable economic activities. For example, both the groups weave coarse clothes having a smaller profit margin than the materials produced by the other two groups. The more and more we go down in the social hierarchy level, we find a higher level of inequality, as has been observed from the case of Gandas. Due to lower educational attainment, these two groups neither do have the knowledge nor confidence to venture out for new products, which will give them more returns for their products.

Table 8 shows that the Kosta caste group has lower educational attainment than the Bhulias. However, the Kosta group exceeds in SLI than the Bhulias. It justifies the fact that, although the formal educational level of

the Kostas is lesser than the Bhulias, the Kostas posses better artistic skills than the Bhulias that produce good qualities of handloom products having higher profit margins. Hence, for a better standard of living, skill development has a better role than formal education for these weavers.

Conclusion

Although human development is broadly dependent on three socio-economic indicators at a macro-level, it has different implications when it is applied at micro-levels. In the meantime, as the HDI could not explain human development satisfactorily; the evolution of the IHDI helped in illustrating the inequalities in the nations even if they had the same HDI. Two countries having the same HDI can be differentiated in terms of their IHDI. Higher inequality accounts for lesser human development. In a pluralistic cultural country like India, when we have multiple ethnic groups having distinct cultures, human progress depends on certain intangible factors embedded in the respective cultures.

Looking at various anthropological theories on culture and based on the arguments of several top-notch anthropologists of the World, the UNDP, in its report of the WDCD, advocated that development is very much dependent on culture, and a culture-specific approach is necessary for human development. Hence, an approach of measuring development and anthropological arguments to substantiate the measure is the need of the hour. At the same time, an anthropological basis for designing policy guidelines is very much relevant in the present-day context.

Through this case study, we could observe that different cultures have varying degrees of human development. At the same time, social hierarchy determines the opportunity available to a group. Since human development largely depends on the available opportunities, its measure varies accordingly. The caste and ethnic groups in India show a pattern of dominance resulting in the inequality in the distribution of power and resources. As a result, a dominant group avails better opportunities than a dominated group, and the human development of the former becomes higher than the latter. The degree of inequality also increases, likewise if we go down the ladder in the social hierarchy. Particularly, when we look at the weaver groups, professional skill becomes more important than formal education. Instead of raising the literacy level in this area, care should be taken to provide more skill-based training compatible with their local culture at one end and the consumer market at the other. New products should be introduced based on the skills of the social groups in the lower level of the social hierarchy, which will provide a higher profit margin similar to the groups at the higher level. Thus, integration of the socio-economic measurement tools along with anthropological/sociological analysis will be more meaningful for human development action plans at micro-levels in the Indian context.

Table 1: Demography of the population

ETHNIC GROUP	BHULIA		KOSTA		KULI		GANDA		TOTAL	
AGE GROUP	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Birth—05	59	5.91	19	4.66	14	6.83	12	5.08	104	5.63
06-10	61	6.11	28	6.86	13	6.34	27	11.44	129	6.98
11-15	76	7.61	37	9.07	12	5.85	30	12.71	155	8.39
16-20	110	11.01	41	10.05	21	10.24	31	13.14	203	10.98
21-25	90	9.01	35	8.58	22	10.73	16	6.78	163	8.82
26-30	128	12.81	47	11.52	34	16.59	24	10.17	233	12.61
31-35	80	8.01	47	11.52	11	5.37	18	7.63	156	8.44
36-40	82	8.21	40	9.80	14	6.83	24	10.17	160	8.66
41-45	66	6.61	22	5.39	9	4.39	11	4.66	108	5.84
46-50	51	5.11	21	5.15	14	6.83	11	4.66	97	5.25
51-55	43	4.30	15	3.68	12	5.85	6	2.54	76	4.11
56-60	52	5.21	16	3.92	11	5.37	12	5.08	91	4.92
61-65	43	4.30	17	4.17	8	3.90	6	2.54	74	4.00
66-70	28	2.80	9	2.21	5	2.44	4	1.69	46	2.49
70 TO ABOVE	30	3.00	14	3.43	5	2.44	4	1.69	53	2.87
Total	999	100	408	100	205	100	236	100	1848	100

Table 2: The Health Index

Caste Group	Child		Institutional		The Health	
	Longevity Index		Delivery Index		Index	
	Indicator	Index	Indicator	Index	AM	GM
Bhulia	59/60	0.983	1 Home delivery	0.98	0.982	0.981
Kosta	18/19	0.947	-	1.00	0.973	1.00
Kuli	12/14	0.857	-	1.00	0.928	0.977
Ganda	11/12	0.916	-	1.00	0.958	0.999

Table 3: Data set for the educational attainment index

Ethnic groups	The total population in the			Total population enrolled		
	respective age group			Primary	High school	College
	Primary (5-10)	High school (10-15)	College (15-20)			
Bhulia	71	96	80	71	86	43
Kosta	35	37	34	35	33	13
Kuli	15	14	17	15	12	11
Ganda	29	39	20	28	32	03

Table 4: The educational attainment index

Caste	Literacy index	Enrollment index	The Educational Attainment index
Bhulia	0.7462	0.689	0.726
Kosta	0.7462	0.640	0.710
Kuli	0.6486	0.733	0.676
Ganda	0.6843	0.453	0.607

Table 5: Per capita Income Index

Caste	Total income from weaving (Rs.)	Per capita income(Rs.)	Income index
Bhulia	16544000	16778	0.894
Kosta	8149000	19973	1.00
Kuli	1647340	8035	0.398
Ganda	1974000	8364	0.417

Table 6: Combined Infrastructure Index

Caste	Infrastructure1			Infrastructure2			Infrastructure3			Combined infrastructural index	
	No. of HHs	Total HHs	Index value	No. of HHs	Total HHs	Index value	No. of HHs	Total HHs	Index value	AM	GM
	Bhulia	180	196	0.918	97	196	0.494	118	196	0.602	0.665
Kosta	81	84	0.964	37	84	0.440	43	84	0.511	0.632	0.600
Kuli	36	49	0.734	14	49	0.285	18	49	0.367	0.457	0.425
Ganda	28	55	0.509	5	55	0.090	1	55	0.018	0.204	0.093

Table 7: The standard of the living index

Caste	Standard of living index
Bhulia	0.818
Kosta	0.879
Kuli	0.417
Ganda	0.347

Table 8: The Human Development Index for the four caste groups

Caste	Health index	The Educational Attainment index	Standard of Living index	HDI
Bhulia	0.982	0.726	0.818	0.835
Kosta	0.973	0.710	0.879	0.846
Kuli	0.928	0.676	0.417	0.639
Ganda	0.958	0.607	0.347	0.586

Table 9: The IHDI for the four caste groups

Caste	HDI Dimension Indices			Adjustment Factors (Fx)			Inequality-adjusted dimension indices (Ix)		
	Health	Education	Standard of Living	Health	Education	Standard of Living	Health	Education	Standard of Living
	Bhulia	0.982	0.726	0.818	0.981	0.953	0.975	0.963	0.691
Kosta	0.973	0.710	0.879	1.00	0.930	0.950	0.973	0.641	0.835
Kuli	0.928	0.676	0.417	0.997	0.970	0.930	0.925	0.655	0.387
Ganda	0.958	0.607	0.347	0.957	0.602	0.459	0.957	0.365	0.159

Table 10: Estimated percentage loss due to inequality in health dimension

Ethnic groups	H1	H2	Ratio	Loss (%)
Bhulia	0.982	0.963	0.980	2.0
Kosta	0.973	0.973	1.00	0.0
Kuli	0.928	0.925	0.996	0.4
Ganda	0.958	0.957	0.998	0.2

Table 11: Estimated percentage loss due to inequality in education dimension

Ethnic groups	E1	E2	Ratio	Loss (%)
Bhulia	0.726	0.691	0.951	4.9
Kosta	0.710	0.641	0.902	9.8
Kuli	0.676	0.655	0.968	3.2
Ganda	0.607	0.365	0.601	39.9

Table 12: Estimated percentage loss due to inequality in standard of living dimension

Ethnic groups	S1	S2	Ratio	Loss (%)
Bhulia	0.818	0.797	0.974	2.6
Kosta	0.879	0.835	0.949	5.1
Kuli	0.417	0.387	0.928	7.2
Ganda	0.347	0.159	0.458	54.2

Table 13: Comparison of the HDI with the IHDI

Caste	HDI	IHDI	Rank		Ratio	Percentage loss
			In HDI	In IHDI		
Bhulia	0.835	0.809	2	1	0.968	3.2%
Kosta	0.846	0.804	1	2	0.950	5.0%
Kuli	0.639	0.616	3	3	0.964	3.4%
Ganda	0.586	0.381	4	4	0.650	35.0%

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