

PVTGs AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT IN ODISHA: A CASE STUDY OF THE MANKIRDIAS

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Abstract

This paper is based on field observations made on Mankirdias/Mankidias - one of the smallest Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) of Odisha. The State Govt. through Micro Projects intended to bring changes in their nomadic life and settle them into the main stream. This paper examines the impact of developmental measures and extent of changes brought in their livelihood process. Housing, land distribution, fisheries and poultry farming are few schemes implemented to change their nomadic life into a settled one. Short time visible indicator of livelihood development interventions do not hold good without integrating these with the long-term development inputs like health and education. It was observed that laxity in monitoring these development measures have led to very small discernible change.

The Concept of PVTGs

Tribal people generally inhabit inaccessible forest and hilly regions. Their economy is simple and self-reliant. Their mode of production depend upon the bio-physical environment (jal, jungle and jameen. It regulates their relationship with the natural resources. Their relationship with the given ecosystem provides them a sense of identity, unity and sense of resilience. They are intrinsically linked to their environment through different strategies, i.e. economic exchange, ceremonies, language and spiritual traditions. Due to changes in the natural environment their survival has become vulnerable. In 1961, the government of India constituted the Dehbar Commission to study and recommend the development measures for the Scheduled Areas and Schedule Tribes.

The Dehbar Commission identified severe inequality within the tribal communities in terms of their development. Quite substantial section of the tribals are extremely backward and live in the primitive form of livelihood. These tribal groups are labelled as Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs). Since then, the marginalized of the marginalized section of India's population have assumed an official identity as PTGs with an

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intention to have special packages of development. The term “primitive” being derogatory, recently the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MOTA) changed, the nomenclature from Primitive Tribal Groups (PTG) to Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). Till date in India, there are 75 PVTGs spread over 17 states and 1 Union Territory (Andaman & Nicobar Islands). As per 2011 census their total population is 2768322 and they constitute 2.65% of total ST population(10,42,81,034) and 0.22% of total population (121,05,69,573). These PVTGs have little education, adhere to pre-agricultural technology, their demographic profile is either stagnant or declining .They are backward, deprived and vulnerable in many frontiers of life in comparison to their ST ethnic brothers and extremely marginalized compared to the general population of the nation. So, the central government and state governments have jointly initiated developmental projects to make them comparable to their ethnic brothers first and then to the general citizen of the country.

Table:1. PVTGs inhabiting different states of India

Sl. No	State/UT	Name of the PVTGs
1	Andhra Pradesh	Chenchu ,Bodo Gadaba, Gutob Gadaba Dongria Khond, Kultiia Khond, Kolam, Konda Reddi, Kondasavara, Bondo porja, khond porja, Parengi proja, Thoti
2	Bihar	Asur, Birhor, Birjia, Hill Kharia, Korwa, Mal paharia, Parhaiya, Sauria paharia, Savar
3	Chattisgarh	Abujh Maria, Baiga, Bharia, Birhor, Bill korwa, Kamar, Sahariya
4	Gujarat	Kolgha, Kathodi, Kotwalia, Padhar, siddi
5	Jharkhand	Asur, Birhor, Birjia, Hill Kharia, Korwa, Mal paharia, Parchaiya, Sauria paharia, Savar
6	Karnataka	Jenu Kuruba, Koraga
7	Kerala	Cholanaikayan, Kadar, kattunayakan, Koraga, Kurumba
8	Madhya Pradesh	Abujh Maria, Baiga, Bharia, Birhor, Bill korwa, Kamar, Sahariya
9	Maharashtra	Katkari/kathodi, Kolam, Maria Gond
10	Manipur	Maram Naga
11	Odisha	Chuktia Bhunjia, Birhor, Bondo, Didayi, Dongria Kondh, Juang, Kharia's, Kutia Kondh, Lanjia saora, Lodha, Mankidia, Paudi Bhuiyan, Saora
12	Rajasthan	Saharia,
13	Tamil Nadu	Irular, Kattunayakan, Kota, Korumba, Paniyan, Toda,
14	Tripura	Riang
15	Uttar Pradesh	Buksa, Raji
16	Uttrakhand	Buksa, Raji
17	West Bengal	Birhor, Lodha, Toto
18	Andaman & Nicobar Island	Great Andamanese, Jarawa, Onge, Sentinelest, Shompen

Source: Tribal Statistics, Ministry of Tribal affairs, Government of India, New Delhi, 2014

Mankirdias

This group is mainly found in Mayurbhanj district of Odisha. According to State Government their total population is 203 as per 2010 PVTG Census. This hunting and food gathering semi-nomadic tribe lives in a small band and moves in the jungle to catch wild animals. Monkey flesh, in particular, is their delicacy. The catch and collections are exchanged in the weekly market for food items and other essentials. As the thickness of the forest and the wild animals decreases in one part of forest, they moved to nearby jungle.

Tanda life:

They live in a small band called Tanda consisting of 5 to 10 households. They make temporary settlement at the outskirts of the jungle near the weekly market. In Tanda temporary huts known as Khumba are made up of small branches and bushes. Naya is the ritual head as well as the Tanda head. It is a male hereditary post. Naya takes all the important decisions of the Tanda and also acts as the decision-maker to solve any dispute. Customarily all members are bound to follow his orders. Sokha is the medicine-man of the Tanda. The Sokha is neither hereditary nor male centric. Either a male or a female can become a Sokha depending upon his or her expertise on medicine.

Family Life:

The Mankirdia society is a patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal one. The family property and name are inherited from father to son. They live in small nuclear family with their unmarried children. After marriage newly wed separates from the natal family and establishes a new household. A single family consists of 3 to 5 members.

Food Habit:

Mankirdia takes meal twice a day viz; one in the morning and the other during late evening. Their meal is mostly composed of boiled rice only. Sometimes they cook vegetables. The lucky ones relishes meat which they might have trapped from the forest. The sun dried monkey flesh are hanged in a smoky area inside the kitchen. It is used as emergency food or to treat the guests.

Mankirdia Resources and Economy:

For Mankirdias, forest is their main resource. Hunting is the most important source of livelihood. Men are engaged in hunting while women are not allowed to go to forest. Men go early in the morning for hunting and/or trapping games. They are highly skilled in trapping monkeys. However, now they also trap small birds like *titar*, and animals like rabbits etc. In the evening while returning from forest they sell the trapped animals in the nearest market and buy essential items. Earlier hunting was

done in a group, but, now they are hunt individually. As a part of custom during the *Disum Sendra* (religious hunting), they go for hunting in group once a year. The game caught is shared by all the Tanda members.

Apart from hunting, Mankirdias collect *Siali* fiber and other wild roots and medicinal herbs from the forest. Mankirdia women process the *siali* fibers and make ropes from it. From this *siali* fiber rope they prepare different articles like *sikher, sika, jori, jofi, dighi, Taghal gurumaha, and fishing net*. Mankirdia women sell these articles in the nearby weekly market.

Among Mankirdias, hunting is the main sources of livelihood and making of fiber articles is their supplementary source of income. The scarcity of wild animals and the stringent forest rules have made the Mankirdias vulnerable. Lack of skill to accept modern occupation and nomadic life style has pushed the Mankirdias to a state of extinction.

Role of HKMDA

In order to the change Mankirdias nomadic life style and bring them into the 'mainstream' the state government had established the Hill Kharia and Mankirdia Development Agency (HKMDA) Micro-Project at Jashipur, Mayurbhanj district in 1986-87. Under this development agency two PVTGs -Hill Kharias and Mankirdia are included. Two Mankirdia hamlets-Kendumundi and Durdura are being taken care by this development agency.

Table 2: Mankirdia hamlets and their Population

Name of PVTG Village	PVTG	Total HHs	Total Population
Durdura	Mankirdia	29	82
Kendumundi	Mankirdia and Hill Kharia	36	123
Total		66	216

Source: HKMDA, Jashipur, Mayurbhanj, Odisha.

Village Durdura:

The village Durdura is located in Jashipur block about 7 km from the Jashipur town. The village has around 52 households of which 29 are Mankirdias household. Santhal are the major tribal group of the village. Mankirdias are rehabilitated in this village from nearby Similipal Reserve Forest. The total population of the village is 82 persons with equal number of males and females.

Village Kendumundi Mankirdia colony:

The village Kendumundi is situated on Karnjia- Anandapur road in Karanjia block. The village has around 32 Mankirdia households and 4 Hill Kharia households. Mankirdias are rehabilitated in this village from nearby Kendumundi Haat. The Mankirdias are provided with house and kitchen garden land of ten decimals. Apart from these they were also provided community land of 5 acres for agriculture.

DEVELOPMENTAL INTERVENTIONS

1. Settlement Scheme

Under this scheme Mankirdia families of Similipal Reserve Forest of Jashipur range were rehabilitated at Durdura village and were provided semi-pucca houses. Each house consists of one room of 12x9 feet with galvanized iron sheet roofing. Similarly, Mankirdias of Karanjia block were rehabilitated at Kendumunidi village with semi-pucca house. Main objective of the rehabilitation scheme was to change the Mankirdias nomadic way of life to a settled one. At present all Mankirdias of Durdura and Kendumunidi village have permanent house. However, there are some Mankirdias inhabiting inside the Similipal Reserve Forest who were not brought under HKMDA. So they still lack permanent settlement and lead no

2. Land Distribution

Along with the rehabilitation scheme, land distribution scheme was also introduced by the HKMDA for Mankirdias. In Durdura village each Mankirdias family got 10 decimal of homestead land. In Kendumunidi village each Mankirdia family got 2 decimal of homestead land and 5 acre of community land. Objective of the scheme was to transform Mankirdias primitive hunting and gathering livelihood into the settled agricultural type.

Apart from agricultural land HKMDA also provided goatery, poultry and other skill trainings during different financial periods to the Mankirdias. The table below shows the different economic interventions implemented to change the Mankirdias lifestyle.

Table 3: Livelihood Interventions Taken by HKMDA for Mankirdias

Income generation area	Interventions
Agriculture and Plantation	Cashew plantation, sisal plantation, land development, arhar /black gram cultivation, paddy cultivation, wheat cultivation, supply of plough and bullock , agricultural implements and supply of diesel pump sets
Livestock farming	Duckery ,Goatery, poultry,
Skill development	Rope making machine ,sewing machine, rice huller, leaf plate making machine and driving skill training.
Entrepreneurship	Small business

Source: HKMDA, Jashipur, Odisha, 2015.

3. Basic amenities - Drinking water

Durdura Mankirdiabasti has ample supply of drinking water facilities with a tube-well and solar pumped overhead piped water supply. In Kendumunidi there is one open well and one tube-well. However, the open well has polluted water. The Mankirdias

do not use the well water. All 32 families are dependent on the single hand pump of the area.

4. Educational Interventions

Literacy level of the Mankirdias is very low. To enhance their educational level HKMDA has started Gyanamandir (a pre-school) at village level. At present two Gyanmandirs are functioning in the two rehabilitated village. The state government has also established a residential school for PVTGs girls at Angarpada near Jashipur.

5. Health Facilities

Health facilities are available in both the Mankirdia rehabilitated colony . In Durdura the PHC is located in Durdura revenue village which is about 200 meters away from the Mankirdia habitation. In Kendumundi, the PHC is only 100 meters from the Mankirdia habitation. Though the PHC in both the villages are nearby, Mankirdias hardly visit them. They have their own traditional herbal treatments. Mankidia visits PHC only when the illness becomes serious and the traditional herbal medicine remains unsuccessful in the healing process. To spread health awareness and modern facilities the HKMDA is organizing health camps periodically in the Mankirdias habitations.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Since Mankirdias are numerically small PVTG in Odisha, their conservation was the first priority of the State government. The Mankirdias were given house for settled life. Three Mankidia families of Durdura got new Mo Kudia house under the State Government's new housing scheme for BPL families. Although, Mankirdias of these two villages got houses under PVTGs housing scheme there are still many Mankirdias living in their traditional Kumbhas in Similipal Forest Area. The objective of housing is not far reaching.

Table 4: Mankirdia Population growth.

Village name	In 2010	In 2015	Difference in 2010-2015
Durdura	93	82	-11
Kendumundi	110	105	-5

The above table shows that there is negative growth of Mankidia population. In Durdura Mankirdia Colony there is a decline of 12% population while in Kendumundi Mankidia Colony there is a decline of 5% population during reported period from 2010 to 2015.

Livelihood interventions are taken up to change the Mankirdias nomadic life style and dependency on forest resources. Permanent house and agricultural land has been provided to help them settle down. Apart from agricultural land they are also

provided goatery, poultry and other skill training during different financial periods. However, livelihood interventions could not bring widespread changes in the economy of the Mankirdias. Still the forest remains one of the major source of their livelihood. Their socio-cultural system remains woven around the traditional forest resources till date.

Table 5: Primary Occupation of Mankirdia

Occupations	Durdura	Kendumundi
Farmer	Nil	1 (3%)
Agricultural Labor	3 (33%)	11 (34%)
NTFP collection/Forest produces	17 (58%)	6 (19%)
Wage labor (non- agricultural)	3 (33%)	4 (12%)
Migrant Labor	1(3%)	Nil
Govt. Job	Nil	Nil
Private Job	Nil	Nil
Pension holders	5 (17%)	4 (12%)
Other/self employed	Nil	6 (Driver)(19%)
Total	29	32

The above table indicates that the majority of Mankirdias are still in the occupation of forest product collections. In Durdura 58% families depend on forest economy whereas in Kendumundi it is only 19%. Durdura is situated near the forest, therefore, dependency on forest is high, whereas Kendumundi, is far from forest so dependence on forest is low.

Though, the literacy rate among Mankirdias is poor compared to other PVTGs but within the span of five year the literacy growth rate has reached 100% in Durdura and 220% in Kendumundi Mankidia settlements.

Table 6: Literacy rate among the Mankirdias

Village	Total >5 years persons	Present Literacy Status				Comparison between 2010 and 2015		
		Illiterate	Male literate	Female literate	Total literate persons	Total literate in 2010*	Total literate in 2015	% of increase
Durdura	69	33	20	16	36	18	36	100
Kedumundi	81	49	17	15	32	10	32	220

This high growth rate of literacy is due to the contributions of educational institutions like Gyan Mandirs and Ashram Schools. The State Government has opened PHCs near the Mankirdias rehabilitated villages. But hardly any Manikrdias visit the this PHCs. This is due to the Mankirdias knowledge on tribal medicine and lack of Government's emphasis on health sector. The table below shows the HKMDA expenditure on health sector.

Table 7: Expenditure on Health by HKMDA.

Financial Year	Total Amount received from all sources	Expenditure on Health	% of total fund expenditure on Health.
2007-2008	45,39,000	10,000	0.22
2008-2009	35,05,000	72,000	2
2009-2010	51,48,000	1,08,000	2
2010-2011	41,34,000	1,20,000	3
2011-2012	55,07,000	30,000	0.54
2012-2013	1,55,78,000	0	0
2013-2014	90,75,000	0	0
2014-2015	58,09,000	89,000	1.53
Total	5,32,95,000	4,29,000	0.80

Source: HKMDA Office, 2015

The above table indicates that expenditure on health and nutrition during the last eight years shows a declining trend. It was not even 1% of the total fund received by the HKMDA. This is one main reason for low reproductive health status among the Mankirdias.

CONCLUSION

Mankirdias, one of the PVTGs of Odisha, are relatively isolated, educationally and economically backward, living in a habitat far away from modern amenities like housing, communication, safe drinking water, agriculture, health facilities, sanitation, education, market, irrigation and remains prone to exploitation and deprivation. They are also vulnerable in various aspects of life. The HKMDA, Jashipur Micro Project established for the Mankirdias, has attempted to uplift their living conditions. However, Mankirdias under the HKMDA shows higher human development indices than those living outside the HKMDA. Therefore, it becomes necessary to bring all Mankirdia families living in Similipal Forest under the HKMDA project before they become further endangered. The State government should make special programmes to increase their population and bring them to the mainstream.

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