



## **Developmental Scenario of Hill Kharia Particularly Vulnerable Community: Special Reference to Education in Mayurbhanj District, Odisha**

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**Abstract:** Education plays an important role for a family and helps in the development of a society as well as an individual's socio-economic status. This assumes more significance in a tribal dominated state like Odisha, with as high as sixty-two (62) tribal communities, including 13 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). The Scheduled Tribe (ST) population of Odisha stands at 95,90,756 persons as per 2011 census. This accounts for 22.85 % of the total population of the state and 9.17 % of the total tribal population of India. Of all the states of India, Odisha has the highest number of Scheduled Tribe communities and PVTGs in the country. Odisha's tribes are at varied degrees of socio-economic development. At one end of the spectrum are communities that live in a somewhat isolated and archaic manner while retaining their basic culture, while at the other end are villages that are indistinguishable from typical farming communities (Ota *et al.* 2018).

Out of 30 districts, 9 districts are considered as tribal districts with 45.45% to 58.72% of Scheduled Tribe population as per 2011 Census. Most of these tribal communities are socio-economically lagging behind many others. They possess a rich cultural heritage and have developed their own knowledge systems, values, institutions, practices and economies, based often on sustainable management of natural resources. Likewise, indigenous peoples have their own cultural methods of transmitting knowledge. The Birhor, Hill Kharia Lodha, Mankidia, etc are some of the

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major pre-literate tribes inhabiting the Mayurbhanj district and they have a pre agricultural level of technology. They mostly subsist on collecting natural resources. Their way of life has impacted the spread of literacy in many ways. The Central Government implemented special provisions and with the collaboration of State government made schools for Hill Kharia primitive people which give them a better platform to strengthen their social and economic life. The present article discusses the major constraints and implementation of the development programmes of education among the Hill Kharia, within the broader perspective of their total way of life and their status of living. Hill Kharia, native of Mayurbhanj district of Odisha are living in the dense forest of the Similpal tiger reserve area.

**Keywords:** PVTG, Education, Development, Hill Kharia, Socio-economic

## Overview

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group's (PVTGs) of India as well as Odisha assume special significance in academic and administrative circles. They are, in actuality, the most marginalised communities having rich cultural traditions characterised by declining or stagnant population, low level of literacy, pre-agricultural level of technology and economic backwardness (<https://tribal.gov.in/writereaddata/Schemes/4-5NGORevisedScheme.pdf>). Being the dwellers of dense forest region, they are the first to be affected by various natural disasters such as drought, flood, infectious diseases and economic and cultural displacements.

It has been observed that despite various welfare initiatives through five-year plans and sub plans the long post-colonial era, the living conditions of the PVTGs of Odisha have not improved much. They are still depending on forest produces and outdated shifting or *slash and burn* cultivation for their livelihood. In the process they have low literacy rates, and widespread poverty with low levels of income.

The present article tries to look into the educational scenario amongst the Hill Kharia, one of the PVTGs in Odisha with particular focus on the major constraints and implementation of the development programmes of education, within the broader perspective of their total way of life and their status of living. The study has been carried out in the dense forest of the Similpal tiger reserve area of Mayurbhanj district of Odisha, where the Hill Kharia have been living since long past.

## Introduction

Education, a human right, is a powerful driver of development as it can act as a powerful tool for reducing poverty and unemployment, improving health and nutritional standards, and achieving a sustained human development-led growth and inclusion (<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education/overview>). In recent years sustained and high levels of economic growth provide a unique opportunity and momentum for faster social sector development (Sen 2007). He has also emphasised education as an important parameter for any inclusive growth in an economy. The policies have to focus on inclusive rather than divisive growth strategies. Education also prevails in illiterate societies, where it is imparted orally and by mass behaviour. Modern education can play the role of “Catalyst” in bringing sea changes in the social, political, and economic fields. The Constitution of India in its preamble has clearly indicated the vision and commitments of the nation to the ideas of democracy, socialism, secularism by securing to all the citizens justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity. Article 46 of the Indian Constitution therefore clearly declares that ‘the state shall promote with special care the education and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and in particular the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from the social injustice and all forms of exploitation’.

In the first place, the term Scheduled Tribes in itself is derived from a Schedule in the Constitution Order of 1950 that grouped tribal populations in independent India into one category for purposes of affirmative action and protective discrimination. In that sense it is more an administrative category. Sociologically speaking, Scheduled Tribes comprise very diverse tribal groups with each tribe having distinct customs, including language, food, etc. Second, from a historical lens, Scheduled Tribes are seen as the ‘original inhabitants’ or the ‘indigenous peoples’ of India – hence the translation into *Adivasi* (*Adi* - earliest time, *Vasi* - resident of). But the Indian state rejects the term ‘indigenous peoples’ as it considers it ‘divisive, undermining the unity of the Indian nation’ (Ghurye Cf Chopra 1988). For this reason, this paper refrains from using the term *Adivasi*, but does use the word ‘tribals’ interchangeably with Scheduled Tribes.

Tribal communities have traditionally owned at least some subsistence land and have had some agriculture to fall back upon. However, at present, it may be observed that they are being increasingly alienated from their land and economic livelihoods due to various factors. According to the 2011 Census, Scheduled Tribes comprise 22.84% of the state population. Further, about 45%

of Odisha is classified as Scheduled Area under Schedule V of the Constitution, which identifies special privileges for those areas where the majority of the population belongs to Scheduled Tribes. India being the second largest tribal inhabited area after Africa is one of the most fascinating nations of the World from an anthropological point of view. The total tribal population of India is 8.6% (Census of India, 2011).

### **Tribal Scenario in Odisha**

Located in the eastern part of India, the state of Odisha has sixty-two (62) tribal communities, *including 13 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)*. The Scheduled Tribe (ST) population of Odisha, stands at 95,90,756 persons as per 2011 census. This accounts for 22.85% of the total population of the state and 9.17% of the total tribal population of India. In this way, it appears that of all the states of India, Odisha has the highest number of Scheduled Tribe communities and PVTGs in the country representing major linguistic groups like Dravidian, Austro-Asiatic, and Indo-Aryan. They have been found at varied levels of acculturation, integration, and assimilation with the Hindu caste societies of the state. Almost 44.21 % of the total land area in Odisha has been declared a “scheduled area.”

Tribes in Odisha are at wide-ranging degrees of socio-economic development. Some of these Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities are living in more or less isolated, archaic ways yet they still retain their basic cultural traditions that are mostly oral in nature. At the same time, a few other ST communities are living in villages that are indistinguishable from other farming communities. One notable feature of Odisha’s tribal panorama is the presence of the largest number of PVTGs among all the States and Union Territories of India. These 13 particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTG) are Bonda, Birhor, Chuktia Bhunjia, Didai, Dongria Kondh, Hill Kharia, Juang, Kutia Kondh, Lanjia Saora, Lodha, Mankirdia, Paudi Bhuiyan and Saora. There are 17 Micro Projects are functioning in different parts of Odisha to take care of the problems and development of PVTGs.

### **Objectives**

The major objective of the present article is to:

1. understand the socio-economic profile of the Hill Kharia people;  
and
2. know the status of education and evaluate the special provision for the girls of the Hill Kharia community.

## Methodology and Study Area

The methodology adopted for this research is census survey method of household survey, and also applied scheduled, questionnaire, participant observation and case study method. Through this method the researcher has collected information from villages, schools and different educational institutions.

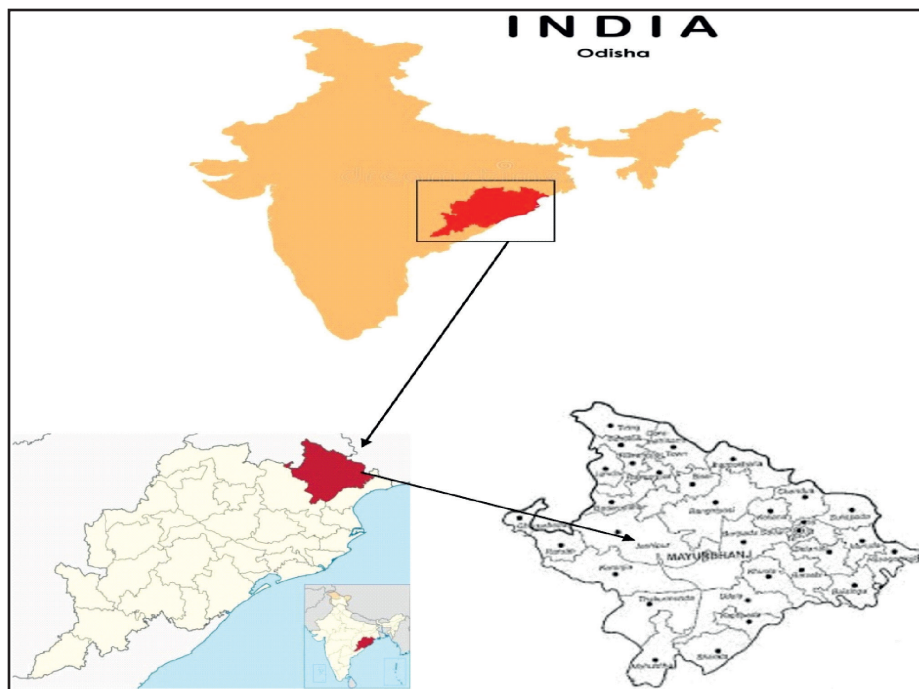
The research has been conducted in the Banabasa village of Jasipura block of Mayurbhanj District where the Hill Kharia mostly inhabits the central part of the Similpal biosphere. This area is the homeland of the Hill Kharia Particularly Vulnerable people and they collect their bread and butter from this bio-sphere.

## Profile of Tribal People of Mayurbhanj District

Mayurbhanj was named after the *Mayurs* and *Bhanjas*, two medieval reigning lineages. According to chronicles, the *Mayurs* ruled Bonai Mandala with the *Bhijjinga* Mandala Bhanjas. These ruling families were socially and culturally quite close. Mayurbhanj was named to honour the two reigning families' longstanding connection. The *Bhanjas* continued to rule over this feudatory state. However, the realm came under Moghul and Maratha authority in 1508 and 1751, respectively, and British occupation in 1803. On August 15, 1947, Mayurbhanj became independent from the British. On January 1, 1949, Mayurbhanj was merged with Odisha. The district is unique in size, having the Similpal Biosphere Reserve, a large tribal population and their unique culture, the famous *Chhau* Folk Dance, rich archaeological evidence, and so on. Mayurbhanj is a landlocked district in northern Odisha with a total area of 10,418 square kilometres, and Baripada as its district headquarters.

At present, the total tribal population of the district constitutes 58.70% of its total population, which is much higher as compared to the 22.84% for the entire state of Odisha (Census of India 2011). Around 55 Scheduled tribes are found to inhabit Mayurbhanj district. Out of these, the Santal are the most numerous of the tribal communities, accounting for 44.92% of the district's total ST population. They are followed by the Kolha (17.67%), Bhumija (11.69%), Bathudi (8.04%), Bhuyan (4.26%), Ho (3.02%), Gonds (2.09%), Munda (1.95%), Saunti (1.93%), and Kharia (1.56%). The Kharia, also known as Hill Kharia, are included in the list of PVTGs due to their smaller numerical strength and precariously unstable foraging economic practices, which, along with their other socio-economic and cultural practices, are impeding their modernisation. Within the district, Scheduled Tribe communities are mostly concentrated in Udala, Khunta, Jamda, Baripada, Bangiriposi, Bisoi, Jashipur, Kuliana,

## Map of the Study Area



Source: Adapted from: <https://www.mapsofindia.com/>; <https://in.pinterest.com/pin/370491506838280059/>

Samakhunta, Kaptipada, Kusumi, Thakurmunda, Bijatala, and Karanja, where their population is more than 60% of the total population of their respective blocks. The Jashipur block has the second highest proportion of ST people in the Mayurbhanj district.

**Table 1: Total Population & Scheduled Tribe Population From 1961 To 2011 In Mayurbhanj**

Status of Tribal Population in Mayurbhanj			
<i>Census Year</i>	<i>Total Population</i>	<i>Tribal Population</i>	<i>Tribal Population (%)</i>
1961	1,204,043	729764	60.61
1971	1,434,200	839853	58.56
1981	1,581,873	912320	57.67
1991	1,884,580	1090626	57.87
2001	2,223,456	1258459	56.59
2011	2,519,738	1479576	58.7

Source: Secondary data form Census of India (2011)



The table 1 shows the total and scheduled tribal population of Mayurbhanj district from the 1961 to 2011 census. It may be observed that the proportion of tribal population declined from 60.61% in 1961 to 56.59% in 2001 while it again rose to 58.7% in 2011. It may also be observed that the total population of the district in 1961 was 1,204,043 persons out of which the tribal population was 729764 persons. In 1971 the tribal population rose to 839853 out of the total population in Mayurbhanj. In the census year 1981 the total population recorded was 1,581,873 out which 912320 was the total of the tribal population. If we look at the data of 1991, 2001, 2011 it may be observed that during these three decades the tribal population has been increasing but the percentage of the tribal population has not been rising. It fluctuated between 57.87 % in 1991 to as low as 56.59% in 2001 while rising marginally to 58.7% in 2011.

### Literacy Trends of Tribes in Odisha and Mayurbhanj

The literacy rate of Odisha, as per 2011 Census was 73.45%, out of which rural literacy rate was 70.78% while urban literacy stood at 86.45%. The gender variation was also significant with 82.40% male and 64.36% female literacy. As against this, the literacy rate of STs was only 52.2% with a disparity of 21.25% which was a large one. This indicates that tribal people of Odisha are far behind in educational attainments. The case is also very serious in case of Mayurbhanj district. In the context of primary education among tribal people, improvement was made in the tribal literacy from 14.18% in 1961 to 63.17% in 2011, but still it is far behind the target. Details of tribal literacy of the state and Mayurbhanj district, from 1961 to 2011 have been given in Table 2.

**Table 2: Total Literacy Rate and St Literacy Rate in Mayurbhanj District, Odisha**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total literacy rate</i>	<i>ST literacy rate</i>
1961	14.18	7.10
1971	18.05	9.63
1981	25.71	14.50
1991	37.88	24.10
2001	51.91	38.80
2011	63.17	53.1

*Source:* Registrar General of India, Census 2011& Statistical Profile of Scheduled Tribes in India 2013c.f Behera, 2015.

Table 2 shows the decadal status of Total literacy rate and literacy amongst ST population of Mayurbhanj. The table also reveals that literacy amongst the ST population always lagged behind the total literacy rate of the district.

## The People: The Hill Kharia

The Hill Kharia, or Kharia is one of such group (PVTGs) located mainly in Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Sundergarh, Keonjhar and Dhenkanal districts of Odisha (India). However, the majority of the population is limited to Similipal National Park and other hilly and forest regions of Mayurbhanj district. In fact, they are considered as the original inhabitants of this area. Etymologically, the word Kharia comes from *kharkharia*, meaning the palanquin bearer (Ota *et al.* 2018). According to traditions, the ancestors of the Kharia used to carry *banghy* or poles and tilled the soil in order to make a living. The Kharia tribe is divided into three broad groups, namely the Pahari Kharia (Hill Kharia), the Dhelki Kharia (early-comers), and the Dudh Kharia (pure Kharia). Out of these only the Hill Kharia is recognised as a PVTG in Odisha. They are semi-nomadic and fully depended on the forest for their livelihood. Technologically they are considered as the least developed communities with their traditional foraging economy. Till today, the subsistence economy of the Hill Kharias centres round the collection of a few minor forest products like sal (*shorea robusta*) resin, sal leaves, honey, arrowroot, bees wax, lac, broom making grass, mat making grass, *khali* stitching and pressing and so on. All these economic activities are mostly seasonal in nature. The Simlipal forests have been the main livewire of their traditional economy which persists even today to a large extent. They mostly collect these forest-based products as per seasons. During the agricultural season they augment their foraging activities either by cultivation or being hired as agricultural labourers. One of the oldest livelihood strategies employed by the Hill Kharias of Similipal forest region is the collection of natural honey. Two types of honey (badamahu or big honey and *sanamahu* or small honey) are collected by them from the tall *sal* tree and big caves with simple tools and technologies. Thus, they have been leading a semi-nomadic life within the hills and forests. Besides, they also practice shifting or jhum cultivation alongside their foraging activities mentioned above (<https://www.scstrti.in/index.php/communities/pvtg/113-pvtg/450-kharia>).

According to Hill Kharia Mankirdia Development Agency's (HKMDA) annual survey report (2015), the total Hill Kharia households in Jashipur were 502. The total population of Hill Kharia was 1485, out of which 714 were males and 771 were females. The average literacy rate of the Hill Kharias of Jashipur was 42.41%, where males were 47.66% and females were 36.41% literate (Cf Maharana 2019).



## **Developmental Programmes for Improvement of Tribal Education**

After independence systematic and planned efforts were made in our country to provide free and compulsory education for children up to the age of 14 years. As enshrined under article 45 of the Constitution, through successive Five-Year Plans efforts were made to achieve the target of 100 % literacy through compulsory and free education for the children up to the age 14 years. The **National Policy on Education 1986** and **1992** gave top priority to the achievement of the goals of **Universal Elementary Education (UEE)**. Various programmes and incentives were initiated for universalising and improving the quality of elementary education in India. However, even after sixty-two years of India's independence the goal of universal elementary education has not been achieved so far. About 10 million children of school going age are not attending elementary schools due to various reasons such as poverty, no access to schools, etc. Government of India launched a scheme known as **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)** in the year 2001-2002 in partnership with the State Governments and local self-governments. It is a comprehensive and integrated flagship programme of Government of India to attain universal elementary education covering the entire country in a mission mode. Besides this, Government of India launched many other incentive schemes to retain the children in the schools which are given below: (1) Free national text books; (2) Free uniforms, stationary, school bags, etc; (3) Mid-day meal scheme; (4) Attendance scholarship for girls, etc.

## **Government Policies and Programmes for Tribal Education**

Starting from the First Five Year Plan Period (1951-1956) the government has been steadily allocating financial resources for the purpose of tribal development. Towards, the ends of the plan (1954), 43 Special Multipurpose Tribal Development Projects (MTDPs) were created. During the Third Five Year Plan Period (1961-1966), the government of India adopted the strategy of converting areas with more than 66 % tribal concentration into Tribal Development Blocks (TBDs). By the end of Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-1974), the number of TBDs in the country rose to 504. Additionally, in 1972 the Tribal Sub Plan Strategy (TSP) was implemented by the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare. TSP was based on twin objectives of socioeconomic development and protection against exploitation.

**The Janshala Programme** is a collaborative effort of the Government of India (GOI) and five UN Agencies – UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO and UNFPA – a community based primary education programme, which aims to

make primary education more accessible and effective, especially for girls and children in deprived communities, marginalised groups, Scheduled Caste/ Scheduled Tribes/minorities, and children with specific needs.

**Special Programmes of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, Mayurbhanj Mu Bi Padhibi, Massive Enrolment and Retention Drive- 2013:** Universalisation of Elementary Education is one of the prime objectives of **Sarva Siksha Abhiyan**. With the enactment of Right to Education Act, it has now become mandatory to provide free & compulsory education to every child in the age group of 6-14 year. Though it is the right of every child to get free and compulsory education still there are so many challenges in the tribal dominating district like Mayurbhanj to bring all of them into the fold of elementary education. Keeping in view the compliance of RTE in hard-to-reach areas and disadvantaged groups, District Administration has launched the Massive Enrolment & Retention Drive programme “**Mu Bi Padhibi**” in convergence with ST/SC Development, Women & Child Development, and Labour & Panchayati Raj Department on April 1, 2013 on the eve of the auspicious occasion of Utkal Divas.

### **Educational Developmental Initiative Provided by Government for Mayurbhanj District**

As per the decision of the State Government of Odisha, Government has established different types of tribal welfare schools in Mayurbhanj District, such as

**1. Ekalavya Model Residential School:** Ekalavya Model Residential School is a Government of India Scheme for model residential school for tribal children. It was established by the Tribal Ministry, Government of India. Ekalavya School was started in June 1997. It aims to provide all round development to each student, laying emphasis on academics, sports, music, fine arts, communication and mathematics, through an innovative curriculum designed to make learning enjoyable.

EMRS is to provide quality middle and high-level education to Scheduled Tribe (STs) students in remote areas, not only to enable them to avail of reservation in high and professional educational courses and as jobs in government and public and private sectors but also to have access to the best opportunities in education at par with the non-ST population. It aims to provide comprehensive physical, mental and socially relevant development of all students enrolled in each and every Ekalavya Model Residential School. The tribal students will be empowered to be change agents making a beginning in their school, in their homes, in their villages and finally in a larger context.

**2. Ashram School:** The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has been implementing a central scheme which aims at establishing Ashram Schools in Tribal Sub-Plan areas since 1990-1991. Under the Tribal Sub-Plan approach a sub plan specifically related to the tribal welfare is formulated for areas that have been defined as having a high concentration of tribal population.

Ashram Schools are residential schools which impart education up to the secondary level to children belonging to Scheduled Tribes (STs). The scheme provides for 100 % central financing for the construction of ashram schools for girls and boys in naxal areas. It gives special importance to the spread of education among Scheduled Tribes. It provides facilities to ST girls and boys to improve their standard of life.

**3. Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya:** Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya Sangathan was established on the 19th day of September 2015, a society under Society Registration Act of Odisha. The General Body is the apex body of the Sangathan headed by Hon'ble Minister, School and Mass Education as the Chairman and there is an executive body headed by DC-cum-ACS as Chairman.

The Adharsha Vidhyalaya seeks to play a key role in spreading modern education in remote parts in the state, while integrating the students of small towns and villages with mainstream education. Through the new breed of enlightened young students thousands of families and the community as a whole will have access to a new world of knowledge and understanding.

**4. Educational Complex for Both Hill Kharia Girls & Boys of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group:** This educational complex is meant for both boys and girls belonging to the Hill Kharia community as they are a particularly vulnerable tribal group of Mayurbhanj in Odisha. During the field study, it was observed that most of the educational problems among the Hill Kharia are due mainly to their precarious foraging livelihood strategies leading to poor economic conditions. This happens to be one of the vital factors for their backwardness in education. As most of the Hill Kharia men remain busy with their different economic activities like honey collection, rope making, collection of seasonal minor forest products, etc. their women folk collect *sal* leaves, tussar cocoons, weave mats, etc. besides their regular domestic chores like fetching water, cooking, cleaning and looking after young children. The older children of school going age often help their parents in their foraging activities and also in domestic front. They are often put in charge of their younger siblings when the parents are busy with their subsistence activities. Thus, the Hill Kharia children are often considered as economic assets by their families. In the process, the school-going children remain frequently absent in

schools. The parents are busy throughout the day for their livelihood, so they mostly send their children in primary school to be looked after by the teacher. The socio-cultural practices like early marriage, bride price, poor economic conditions, lack of proper educational environment at home and resultant socio-psychological issues are also a barrier for the development of education among the Hill Kharia.

The Educational Complex situated in Angarpada under the jurisdiction of Jashipur block falls within the present study area. It was established in the year 2008. At present there are eight classes i.e., Class I to VIII.

During the fieldwork an attempt was made to know about the educational status of the Hill Kharia people of the study village as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Educational Status Of Hill Kharia**

SL. No	Standard of Education	Male	Percentage (%)	Female	Percentage (%)	Total	Percentage (%)
1	Illiterate	54	47.36	57	48.71	111	48.05
2	Literate adults	18	15.78	15	12.82	33	14.28
3	Anganwadi	11	9.64	12	10.25	23	9.956
4	Primary School (1-5 <sup>th</sup> )	22	19.29	21	17.94	43	18.61
5	Middle School (6-7 <sup>th</sup> ) (Upper Primary)	4	3.50	8	6.83	12	5.19
6	High School (8-10 <sup>th</sup> )	3	2.63	4	3.41	7	3.03
7	Higher Secondary	2	1.75	0	0	2	0.865
	Total	114	99.95	117	99.96	231	100.00

Source: Primary Data

Table 3 briefly highlights the educational status of both male and female population of the study area. The total population of the study villages was 231 members and out of these 114 members were males and 117 members were females. As high as 96.07%(?) of the villagers were illiterate. The proportion of illiterate females (48.71%) was higher than that of illiterate males (47.36%). It was seen that only 14.28% adult persons were literate. Around 10% young children were in the pre-primary level of Anganwadi class where 11 (9.64 %) boys and 12 (10.25 %) girls were enrolled. In the Primary level, 22 (19.29 %) boys and 21 (10.25 %) girls were studying at the time of data collection. While 4 (3.50%) boys and 8 (6.83%) girls were found in the Middle School level, there were only 3 (2.63%) boys and 4 (3.41%) girls in the High School. No girls were studying at Higher Secondary stage as against 2 (1.75%) boys only in the Banabasa village of Jasipur block of Mayurbhanj District.

**Table 4: Enrolment in Educational Complex (Boys) Hill Kharia Ptg**

SL No.	Class	2016-17	Percentage (%)
1	I	23	23
2	II	20	20
3	III	14	14
4	IV	18	18
5	V	25	25
6	<b>Total</b>	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 4 shows that the enrolment ratio of the primary school only for boys where the Government is providing free education and hostel facilities for Hill Kharia boys according to the micro project of the Tribal sub-plan. During 2016-2017, maximum boys (25%) were enrolled in Class V followed by 23 % in Class I.

**Table 5: Educational Complex (Girls) Hill Kharia Ptg  
(Classwise Enrollment and Distribution)**

SL.No.	Class	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
1	I	17 (6.77)	16 (6.4)	15 (6.12)	47 (13.86)	30 (8.24)	46 (12.43)
2	II	57 (22.70)	15 (6.00)	24 (9.79)	36 (10.61)	50 (13.73)	32 (8.64)
3	III	43 (17.13)	56 (22.4)	15 (6.12)	28 (8.25)	36 (9.89)	49 (13.24)
4	IV	53 (21.11)	43 (17.2)	51 (20.81)	25 (7.37)	30 (8.24)	37 (10.00)
5	V	34 (13.54)	50 (20.00)	41 (16.73)	50 (14.79)	24 (6.59)	30 (8.10)
6	VI	33 (13.47)	28 (11.2)	50 (20.40)	48 (14.15)	49 (13.46)	25 (6.75)
7	VII	14 (5.57)	31 (12.4)	24 (9.79)	50 (14.9)	48 (13.18)	51 (13.78)
8	VIII	-	11 (4.4)	25 (10.20)	25 (7.37)	46 (12.63)	44 (11.89)
9	IX	-	-	-	30 (8.84)	21 (5.76)	39 (10.54)
10	X	-	-	-	-	30 (8.24)	17 (4.59)
11	<b>Total</b>	251 (100.29)	250 (100.00)	245 (99.96)	339 (92.14)	364 (99.96)	370 (99.96)

(Figures in parentheses indicate % to column total)

Source: Primary Data

This table shows the enrolment ratio of the educational complex of the PVTG Girls of Hill Kharia educational complex. This table presents the data for the classes 1 to 10<sup>th</sup> and the total number of girls enrolled in the years from 2011-12 to 2016-17. In Class I, the proportion of girls enrolled had gone up from 6.77% in the year 2011-12 to 12.43 % in 2016-17. However in 2012-13, there was a fall in the enrolment of girls in Class I. In the same manner the number and proportion of girls who were enrolled into and/or attended different classes seemed to fluctuate not only from one class to another but also from one year to another. In 2012-13, there were 250 girl students from Class I to VIII in this school. However, in the year 2014-15, two more classes (IX and X) were added with the collaboration of District Tribal Welfare department and it is now continued up to class-X from class-I. The last two years had seen the rising trends in the enrolment of girls. The number of total girls enrolled in that school was 339 in the year 2014-15 which rose to 364 in 2015-16 and finally in 2016-17 370 girls were enrolled for classes I to X.

**Table 6: Category Wise Students Strength in Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya**

Category	VI-A	VI-B	VII-A	VII-B	VIII-A	VIII-B
<b>ST (B)</b>	08 (20.51)	11 (29.00)	12 (30.00)	15 (37.5)	15 (37.5)	13 (33.00)
<b>ST (G)</b>	22 56.41	15 39.5)	17 (42.5)	16 (40.00)	17 (42.5)	17 (38.00)
<b>SC (B)</b>	03 (7.7)	01 (2.63)	03 (7.5)	00 0	01 (2.5)	02 (5.00)
<b>SC (G)</b>	00 0	02 (5.26)	03 (7.5)	01 (2.5)	02 (5.00)	03 (8.00)
<b>GEN (B)</b>	01 (2.6)	03 (7.9)	02 (5.00)	01 (2.5)	02 (5.00)	01 (3.00)
<b>GEN (G)</b>	04 (10.25)	06 (15.8)	03 (7.5)	07 (17.5)	03 (7.5)	03 (8.00)
<b>MIN (B)</b>	01 (2.6)	00 0	00 0	00 0	00 0	00 0
<b>MIN (G)</b>	00 0	00 0	00 0	00 0	00 0	01 (3.00)
<b>Total</b>	39 (100.00)	38 (100.00)	40 (100.00)	40 (100.00)	40 (100.00)	40 (100.00)

Source: Primary Data

This table shows the category wise strength of students including both boys and girls enrolled in Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya which was implemented by Odisha Government in the year 2016-17. The total number of the students



enrolled was 237 and they were studying in classes VI to VII divided into two sections, one each for boys and girls.

It was encouraging to note that the student strength showed a gradual rise from Class VI to Class VIII as far as ST boys were concerned. However, an opposite pattern was noticed as far as the student strength of girls belonging to the Scheduled Tribe category. It showed that more girls were dropping out in higher classes as compared to boys. This was mainly due to the gender bias existing in the community and poor economic conditions, the older girls of the family are often entrusted with the domestic responsibilities like fetching water and taking care of their younger siblings besides helping their parents in their foraging activities.

## Conclusion

The finding of the present study revealed that the Hill Kharia people of the region were slowly adapting to the modern education system but their economy was still operating on traditional subsistence pattern leading to a precarious and comparatively under-developed economy as compared to other communities. Their livelihood practices fully depend upon the collection of minor forest products augmented by occasional wage labourer. It was observed that illiteracy and lack of awareness were the major hindrances faced by these people. Moreover, they were addicted to alcoholism. Both male and female habituated with the practice of drinking *mahua* (traditional intoxicating drink made from the flowers of *madhuca longifolia*) liquor which often stood on the way towards their socio-economic development and all round progress. But with the initiatives of Hill Kharia Development Agency and Government of Odisha, people were now becoming aware of the plans and policies and were coming forward to participate in these developmental activities and processes. Present study reveals that the status and standard of education is rising within the community day by day. Comparatively boys are in a more advantageous position than the girls so far as their enrolment and educational attainment are concerned. However, more and more girls are coming out of their homes to receive education in schools and thereby trying to develop themselves as well as the society at large. The educational complex provides a basic holistic education including lessons in preservation of their culture, tradition, custom at the same time providing the necessary skills in engaging in income generating activities. Besides classroom teaching, the students are learning folk songs, dances and some craft making skills.

Thus, there is an urgent need for various government interventions, planners and policy makers to address this problem and allocate more funds in the central and state budgets for tribal education. Easy access and more opportunities should be provided to the tribal children in order to bring them to the mainstream of economic development which is badly necessary for the development of the nation.

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