

## Livelihood and Anthropology: A Study of Tribal Villages in India

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### Abstract

This paper is an attempt to study the diversification of livelihood through migration and other livelihood options. It tries to explain various options adopted by Juangs as their coping mechanism has been raised the question that is it really sustainable or had negative impact in their livelihood pattern. This paper has also undermined the changing occupational behavior and migration which is one of the rising trends among Juang which is affecting not only their economic life but also their socio-cultural life, and overall changes that have come in their family and kinship network, ritual, marriage system, festival and institution have their bearing on the livelihoods pursued.

**Keywords:** Livelihood; Coping mechanism; Migration; Rituals

### Introduction

For the last few decades and more particularly since 1990's the issue of human right violation of rights to life and livelihood of tribal people has become a central concern for the policy makers and general society, alike. Therefore, the discourse on tribal movements and issues of tribal livelihood revolved around securing their well-defined rights on land and forest resources. It is imperative to know the impact of state interventions on the livelihood base of tribal people and the manner in which the tribal people have articulated their collective concerns from the point of view of the prospects of their livelihood promotion and protection. Anthropological studies have shown that the man-nature relationship do not remain the same forever. The specific environmental components used by society are put to modified use and may also be used for improvements through diversified uses. However, each cultural group advocates sustainable way of managing the resources and bio-diversity conservation such advocacy takes place due to certain culturally defined norms and principles, which are specific to that particular cultural group. This results in a relatively harmonious relationship between human beings and the natural environment.

It is pertinent to note that, traditionally villagers, specifically the tribal, managed their affairs and resources on a sustainable basis [1]. Their village councils ensured strict observance of institutionalized rules and cultural practices for the sustainable use and management of natural resources. They also regulated the use of natural resources more prudently. Studies have shown that most of the tribal communities are well aware of the value of conserving biological resources and had devised effective methods to conserve them [2]. Indigenous peoples' knowledge, conservation beliefs and values, environmentally adaptive and sensitive land use, resource management practices, and determined defense of territory and natural resources have enabled many of them to inhabit in the natural habitats for centuries without destroying their ecosystems and biodiversity [3].

### Literature Review

Livelihood studies were brought to the center stage of development aspects in the late 1990s and the beginning of the new millennium, when the sustainable livelihood framework was strongly promoted. The concept of sustainable livelihood is an attempt to go beyond the conventional definitions and approaches to poverty eradication which were found to be too narrow because they focused only on certain aspects of manifestation of poverty, such as low income, and did not consider other vital aspects of poverty such as vulnerability and social exclusion. It is now recognized that more attention must be paid to

the various factors and processes which either constrains or enhance poor people's ability to make a living in an economically, ecological and sustainable manner. The livelihood approach focused very much on how people organized their lives, more on opportunities and more on agency, rather than concentrating on their impoverishment [4].

For anthropologist Sandra Wallman [5], who carried out extensive research on livelihood patterns in London in the early 1980s, definition of livelihood should include all the productive tasks such as finding or making shelter, transacting money, and preparing food to be put on table or for exchange in the market place. It is an umbrella term that includes the entire gamut of people and resources and what people do with them. Livelihood essentially revolves around people, their resources such as land, crops, seeds, labour, knowledge, cattle, money, social relationships, and so on. But these resources cannot be disconnected from the issues and problems of access and changing political, economic, and socio-cultural circumstances. Thus, an understanding of livelihood is necessary as it clarifies some important issues about the role and importance of forest as a common Property Resource (CPR) in the economic life of rural women. Sajjad Hassan in his research project entitled "tribal hunger and destitution, with select PVTG communities-Juang and Lodha in Odissa, Saharia and Bhill in Rajasthan, Gond and Konda Reddy in Andhra Pradesh" examined to understand tribal destitution on a range of subjects-land and forest rights and livelihood opportunities; access to food and nutrition, health and education entitlements; and policy engagement, at local and macro levels, including participation and voice in programme management.

By 'Livelihood' we mean the processes whereby people obtain the necessities of life, exactly what the necessities of life. Exactly what the necessities of life are varies from society to society, but one thing is certain: they are more than just food, clothing and shelter. As one author has written, livelihood not only involves making a living, it also making it meaningful [6]. What he means is that there is a moral

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or cultural dimension to livelihood as well as a material dimension: livelihood involves not simply the satisfaction of material needs it also involves the satisfaction of emotional, spiritual and intellectual needs. A useful definition of 'livelihood' is provided by Norman Long: [The term] livelihood best expresses the idea of individuals and groups striving to make a living, attempting to meet their various consumption and economic necessities, coping with uncertainties, responding to new opportunities, and choosing between different value positions" [7]. As long describes it, livelihood is an active process of 'striving', 'attempting', 'coping', and 'choosing'. Emphasizing the fact that livelihood is more than just a matter of finding food, shelter and clothing, Sandra Wall man writes that:

Livelihood is never just a matter of finding or making shelter, transacting money, getting food to put on the family table or to exchange on the market place. It is equally a matter of ownership and circulation of information, the management of skills and relationships, and the affirmation of personal...identity. She goes on to say that: Identity-constructing processes are inherent in the pursuit of livelihoods – livelihood strategies entail the building of relationships with others..... What we learn from Wallman is that gaining a livelihood involves entering into social relationships with other people- with relatives, friends, strangers, buyers, sellers, employers, government agents, and that these social relationships are built around identities – identities based on kinship, ethnicity, religion, nationality and social class. Much of the work of livelihood therefore involves building and maintaining social identities and social relationships based on those identities. This can be described as the socio-cultural dimension of livelihood. This brings us to the importance of anthropology for the study of livelihood. Livelihood approach was considered as an important means to ameliorate the conditions of marginal communities by focusing upon their assets and resources. It analyses how people utilize these assets and resources. It analyses how people utilize these assets and resources and negotiate their problems.

The real motto of my research is to find out the sustainable livelihood pattern of Juang (PVTG) tribal community which is earlier a shifting cultivators and hunting gatherers. Under the impact of Urbanization, modernization, acculturation they have brought immense change. As their habitats shrink their lifestyles of hunting and food gathering are seriously eroded, their survival threatened. Their forest got degraded because of lot of reasons. The rise of mining, intervention of outsiders and rise of population become major threat for Juang community.

### Present livelihood situation

I carried out study on Juang tribe which is comes under PVTG (Primitive tribal Group). I have taken two Juang villages named as Gonasika and Guptaganga which is situated in Keonjhar District of Orissa in India. My study is completely based on qualitative analysis which is also a part of my PhD work. To analyse their livelihood pattern I have studied their past livelihood pattern, present livelihood pattern and lastly I have focused on policies initiatives meant for the betterment and improvement of their livelihood.

In their current livelihood pattern Juangs carried out settled agriculture in the homesteads (Badi) and low and medium uplands. The Juang of the study area cultivate kharif crops specially paddy. They depend on bullocks for ploughing and they used simple implements like yokes, Hatchet, wooden handle of sickle, spade, crowbar, axe, hanging rope shelf for their cultivation. They depend on Monsoon and no-alternative irrigation facilities are being provided by Government. Paddy is a staple crop and the staple diet of the Juangs but sometimes

they consume millets and maize at the time of insufficiency of paddy. Due to development interventions, I observed certain changes in the life and livelihood of Juangs. These changes are observed in the literacy status, educational achievements and their employment status. The livelihood activities are settled agriculture, shifting agriculture, agricultural labour, non-agricultural labour, mat- stitching, Pala work, driving, teaching, VRO (NGO employee), aaya (care taker), industry worker, petty business, priest in temple, tailoring, cooking in school, contractor, ward member, engage in horticulture, railway construction work, working in coalmines, MGNREGA laborer. Deprived of their traditional livelihood and low productivity of their agricultural compelled to migrate to urban areas and metropolises like Cuttack, Balasore, Bhubaneswar, Jajpur as well as further afield to Chennai, AP, Bangalore, West Bengal mostly for non-agricultural work. My result shows that Juangs livelihood is in changing trend. Their traditional livelihood pattern is declining. Traditionally the options for livelihood were no much diversified. They had no much opportunity to go out. They are completely depending on shifting cultivation and food gathering. In the history their dependence on forest was not merely for livelihood but for their cultural requirement. Farming was there in the form of shifting cultivation but was not very prominent. Due to modernization and emergence of industry have giving them a scope for moving out of villages. Introduction of development projects have widened their scope of livelihood. Their rate of migration is increasing.

### Changing lifestyles (Social and cultural changes due to migration and livelihood changes)

The findings reveal that under the Impact of modernization and acculturation, they have brought immense change particularly in their adornment pattern, used of modern amenities and material culture. Migration is one of the driving forces of diversification, even amongst those who didn't migrate. Labor migration brought the villages closer in a cultural and social sense to urban life and opened up a whole new range of products, fashion and lifestyles. People migrating to urban areas bring broader range of food products, new style of clothing and other consumer goods to the villages when they returned from migration. Migrants brought back information about migrant labor opportunities and also encouraged other people to migrate. So migration among Juangs is a biggest factor in changing lifestyle.

There is an impact of urbanization in the study area. Now many Juangs have Television and Radios and using solar power for cooking. Now-a-day's Juangs have mobile phone. There is Government policy of food distribution (PDS) so the consumption patterns of Juangs have changed and Juangs can get rice through BPL card. Preference of millets and maize has declined. Now Juangs cultivate vegetables and eating vegetables also. There are working opportunity created by Government and Non-Government organization.

The negative impact of migration is that the younger generation expectation is very high and it breakdown in household relation. Now-a-days Hindu influence has also percolated deeper and their patron deities losing their importance. The dynamics of 'Mandaghara' which was once upon a time, the pivotal tribal socio-cultural institution has lost its social identity and cultural luster. Most powerful and vibrating kinship organization, inter and intra village relationship are losing importance, and co-operation at family level and unity among Juangs are changing in a negative direction. The process of sanskritization and modernization had its impact on the lives and livelihoods of Juangs. Thus in turn has its effect on the performance of marriage ceremonies, rituals in the settlement and other cultural arrangement of the communities. Changu dance is a very famous and gives Juangs to a

unique identity which slowly lost its value. Juangs youth has no more interests in their traditional and cultural values. In past bride price was very famous in Juangs but now days it turned in to dowry system. Now days Juangs lost their unity and sometimes group activities convert in to individual activity. There are lots of social and cultural changes prevalent more in Gonasika than Guptaganga. Many other cultural and ritual practices among Juangs have also gone in to oblivion. There are changes in cropping pattern and they are learning new technology of agriculture. Sometimes Middle men, financial institution and Moneylender, NGOs and others have become a part of the Juang life to show them development but sometimes it is leading to the poverty trap. Sometimes they are facing difficulties to cope up with new trend [8].

#### Notes:

- Juang-A primitive tribal group which is famous for shifting cultivation and as food gathering tribe but now is in development pile.
- Mandaghara-A youth dormitory house for Juangs
- Pala work-Local singing group existing in rural areas of Orissa.

#### Discussion

These findings highlighted about a primitive tribal community which is traditionally famous for a shifting cultivator community adopting diversification of livelihood as a coping strategy. Their strategies include intensification of existing income activities, migration, informal credit networks, adjusting consumption pattern, adopting settled agriculture. Compare to past their education standard is increased. Now a day's migration is very rampant among Juangs. To counter the sufferings of Juangs development agencies have shown greater attention to improve their living standard. The development interventions of the government as well as private agencies also have their impact on the livelihood pursuits of the Juang community. My study reveals that after all the impact of development agency still a number of Juang people still doing shifting cultivations. According to my analysis in Guptaganga village 7 members still doing shifting cultivation. On the basis of my participant observations it shows that due unavailability of land they are forced to do so. The reason of

increasing more wage laborers' is because of small plots of lands and insufficiency of food.

#### Conclusion

These findings highlight on the concepts of livelihoods and the pattern of livelihoods, their vulnerabilities, their adoptability to cope with crisis and the role of development agency involvement in the implementation of these concepts in their evaluation studies. It is important to note that diversification of livelihoods only ensures maintenance of a given standard of life rather than improving the existing standard of living. It is need to apply appropriate strategies for sustainable socio-economic development by overcoming the barriers. So we can say that our endeavor needs to see overall development of Juang community and ensuring that the honor and freedom of the Juang community is preserved and not compromised in any way throughout the development process.

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