

Forest Products Collection of Hill Kharias of Mayurbhanj of Odishain Eastern India: A Recent Study

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Abstract--- *This article is intended to analyze forest resources collected by the Hill Kharias of Odisha in Eastern India. The forest products of Hill Kharias of Mayurbhanj have unique retail characteristic, which is overlooked by most of the earlier scholars. In Order to investigate the forest resources things of the Hill Kharia people, the concept of the design in minor forest resources collection by them is masked by the development in their society in modern period. The Hill Kharias trace their Origin from a pea-fow's egg and earlier scholars like Russell and Hiralal have Mentioned they have been derived from Kharkharia, which mean a palanquin or litter. So that they were called Kharia and lived in the forest area and seasonally collection variety type resources of forest like Mohu, (Honey), Patra (Leafs), Katha (fire woods), Fola (Fruits), Chera (Root, Tuber), Chhatu (Mashroom) etc. The groups of an aboriginal who constitutes simple and small scale societies were culturally homogeneous had life style isolated and inaccessible tracts of hill and forest and continue to an archaic way of life and absorb the change slowly and known as Particular Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). The collection of forest products of Hill Kharias is one of the important aspects of their economic subsistence. Hence it is very interesting for scholars of tribal history to know about the details collection of forest production of people of the Hill Kharia tribe of Mayurbhanj. Further it is also curious to identify the indigenous wisdom of the minor forest resources to understand the material culture of the Hill Kharia tribe of Mayurbhanj. The present article attempts to highlight the socio-economic subsistence of Hill Kharias of Mayurbhanj based on their forest productions in details.*

Keywords--- *Hill Kharias, Forest, Products, Fruits, Mayurbhanj, Odisha, India.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The forest resource collection of Hill Kharias of Mayurbhanjis one of the fascinating aspects of primitive tribal economic system of Odishain Eastern India. Economically, although Odishais backward but it is sound in traditional tribal culture for which the state of Odisha is very significant in Eastern India. The Hill Kharias, who have been lived in the Similipal hill ranges of Mayurbhanj district. They were depending largely on little agriculture, eco-activities like forest product collections and simple form of wage labour. Inconsideration of their present level of economic life, they had been identified as one of the Primitive Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in the state of Odisha and their economic is in the subsistence level. They also depend on mainly on the forest resources collection, pre-agriculture or few agriculture and wage labour etc. for livelihood. Nine districts of whole Odisha are reflected as tribal districts accordingly the geographical location. The total population of Odishais 41,947,358 as per the 2011 census and out of total 22.1% goes to the tribal people i.e. 8,145,081(2011census).¹The lifestyle and economy of

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tribals are limited to the natural products, pre-agricultural knowledge and definite original form of workings. Due to the establishment of manufacturing centres and market places for money economy, the long-standing association between tribes and nature became troubled. Among hundreds of Tribal communities living across the length and breadth of India country there are some groups who are relating deprived and economically backward. They have been identified and designated as Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) for propose of providing special attention for development. In India 75 Particular Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) populaces inhabit various geographical state regions and out of the 13 PVTGs inhabit in Odisha state. By the end of 10th five year plan period, 17 Micro Projects, covering parts of 20 blocks, and 547 Villages in 12 districts in Odisha.³(According to census of 2011) (The 13 PVTGs namely the Birhor, Bonda, Chuktia Bhunjia, Didayi, Dongria Kandha, Hill Kharia, Juang, Kutia Kandha, Lanjia Saora, Lodha,, Paudi Bhuyanm Mankirdia and Saora).⁴ The aim and objectives of this paper to highlight the traditional economic subsistence of Hill Kharias based on purely their primitive method of collection of forest products. Especially in Mayurbhanj district is a tribal dominated district where 55 tribes and 3 Particular Vulnerable Tribal Groups inhabited in different blocks⁵(According to 2011 census reports). Out of this Hill Kharias one of the major Particular Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in Mayurbhan district, Odisha, India, in South Asia context. They are still in an indigenous life and living on the remote area of Similipal National park of the northern Odisha. The district of Mayurbhanj lies between 21^o N and 22^o, 34'N latitudes and between 85^o, 40' E and 87^o11' E longitudes. The district of Mayurbhanj is surrounded on the north by the Singhbhum district border of Jharkhand and Mindnapur district of west Bengal, on the South by the district of Balasore district and Keonjhar district, in the east by the Mindnapur and Balasore district, on the west by the district of Keonjhar and Singhbhum district, It was the largest and wealthiest of the feud and wealthiest of the feudatory state of northern Odisha, India, in South Asia context. The district covers an area of 10, 4164, square kilometers. It comprises four subdivisions.⁶ this tribe has been identified in 7th five year plan in 1985-90⁷ The Hill Kharia is a primitive tribal people (regional language is *adivasi* or *Vanavasi*). They live spreadly in different states of India viz. Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal and Madhyapradesh. The Hill Kharias mainly found in Jashipur, Karanjia, Morada, and Suliapada, Baripada, Shamakhunta, Uduala, Rairangpur Blocks and also other Block of Mayurbhanj District in northern Odisha.⁸ Under the Hill Kharia and Mankidia Development Agency, Micro Project of Jashipur of Mayurbhanj has identified two blocks are Jashipur and Karanjia mostly living Hill Kharia people. In the two blocks 8 G.P., 18 villages, 756 Household, Number of Populations-2,406 (Male-1,192 & Female-1,214). (According to survey of HKMDA, Jashipur in June 2011). They are locally known as '*Pahari Kharia*', because they live in the midst of forest and till today depend upon forest produce or resources for the their livelihood and economic life. A Hill Kharia house comprises of 1 room or 2 rooms, and it is used as all purposes like bed room, store, and kitchen, etc.⁹ But no among the people of different races, the functional affinities, the Social- economic life of the Hill Kharias is quietly different. They are collection forest produces seasonally from Similipal hill/ Similipal National park or own their different forest area/land these are:-Sal resin, Honey, fire woods, leaves, different type of Mushroom, Greens, seeds, edible, roots, fruits and herbal medicine and Red ants (*kurtkuti*). These forest things are collected by the Hill Kharias in different seasonally.¹⁰

II. METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The data for this article has been collected as part of the research carried out during the field work in the different time and places. Among the Hill Kharia people of, Jashipur and Karanjiblock of Mayurbhanj district, Odisha, India. The present scholars have taken so many methods for data collection through household survey, structured interview, scheduled and help of case studies, participant, observation and group discussion. But in this article present scholars' only qualitative data are used from Primary Sources or Secondary Sources. The primary data for this present study have collected systematically from two blocks dominated by Hill Kharia villages of Mayurbhanj.

III. DISCUSSION AND RESULT ANALYSIS

3. Collection of Minor forest products of Hill Kharias

For collection of the minor forest resource produces, both husband and wife of Hill Kharia community frequently go in groups. Occasionally, the teen age girls of the village also join to form a small group for the gathering of forest products.

3.1. Honey (Mohu) Collection

When we say about honey or *Mohu* at that time automatically come out about the Hill Kharias. They are very expert in climbing any trees and very brave, strong healthy figure man. The honey collection is one part of life or major items of the Hill Kharias. Forest resources are collected not only Hill Kharia but also their neighbouring tribal groups such as Santal, Munda, Ho, Bhuniya, Kolha, etc.¹² These tribal people are collected only for home-based. The Hill Kharias collect honey mainly selling purpose of their neighbouring villages, nearby markets (*Bazar*) and they get some money and maintain their family/livelihoods life. Honey is the most items for the Hill Kharia tribe generations past they have been practising collecting of honey. It is generally collected all round in the year. There is no fixed periods or seasons for its collection. It is thus available in the local market almost in all the seasons. They perform certain traditional rites and rituals before starting the collection and also drop a little honey on the ground afterward's to propitiate the jungle deities generally they prefer to do this work at night, but sometimes they do it even during the as well.

They smoke out the bees and then extract honey from the hive by climbing up to the hive by a special ladder/rope made of *siarilai*, a creeper and samba sticks. The bee hive is plucked and put in the basket.¹¹ the honey is extracted later. One hive generally produce maximum four k.g. honey to minimum one k.g. According to the entomologists, in Odisha, there are found four species of honey bees. These are: 1. Rock honey bee (*Apis dorsata Fabricious*), 2. Little honey bees (*Apis florea Fabricious*), 3. Medium size honey bees (*Apis cerana Fabricious*) 4. Dammer bee (*Trigona Species*). The Hill Kharias are collecting honey bees into only two broad types on the basis of their size¹² like:- 1. Big honey- *Bada Mahu* (as *Baghua* in Odia) its lives branches of any tree or any place. This is very powerful dangerous honey (*mahu*). If beats to us three or four bees we must patient. 2. Small honey- *Sana Mahu*. It lives branch hall of the tree. Generally these two bees are available more and more in the Similipal National park.

3.2. Frankincense/Resin produces (Jhuna)

Like other forest resources things, this was/is also one crucial or the most importance income sources of the Hill Kharias. Sal resin is called as *Jhuna* (in local language).¹² This is an Odia etymological term. They are collected two times in yearly viz. *Baisakh* (May-June), *Aswina* (month of September-October.) and now a days every day in the year. Except two months in other season also come out but not like more than that two months. Sal resin is collected mainly for selling in the market and they get Per.kg. one hundred rupees only. There are two types of Frankincense/Resin (*Jhuna*) basically found in the Similipal Nation sanctuary in the Mayurbhanj district. Accordingly basis of colours these are: -i. Black deep brown resin- *Kala Jhuna*, ii. White resin-*Dhala Jhuna*.¹³ These things are not easy to collect from the Sal tree; it takes few more day need. One day they go to forest and cutting so many Jesuits bark of the saltrees and after few days automatically will be produces/prepare from on that trees and after that they are collected by their axe or any weapons. Hall day they collected and take to selling the nearest agent or daily market (*Hato, Hath. Hato is a local laguage*), and maintain their livelihoods.

3.3. Collection of Sal leaf

Sal leaves are used by all tribal people many years ago. It's very significant materials for the tribal society. They use both side in their day to day life such as home materials such as during the each every worship or as utensils and another side is used as income sources. Few of them are collect hall day in the yearly except few months. Mostly the leaves assortment emanate two times in a year. To start with, it begins in April-June of each year just after wintertime and earlier raining period. In the next phase it initiates from middle of September soon later the stormy season upto December end earlier winter begins. During this period, fresh and greater dimension leaves remain accessible. Hill Kharias are gathering leaves after that prepare leaf plates and cups for own use and also for sale. Mayurbhanj area is the highest market for Sal leafs¹⁴. In spite of the fact that there are no authentic figures accessible on the amount of leaf gathered every year and promoted. In the recent days however the interest of leaf cup (*Duna*) and plates (*Khalis*) have been gone down because of the presentation of exchange items finished up of thwarted various plastics and papers, which are less expensive. This is immediate impact to the monetary states of the Hill Kharias and furthermore other innate individuals. This is the most crucial profession of the Hill Kharias for their livelihoods.

3.4. Sal Seed

The Sal seeds are also collected from the Sal trees which are in great abundance in Odisah¹⁵ by the months of April and May are collected by the Hill Kharias and other tribal people also collected in these days. They go to forest in Moring and they return in the evening and they take with their begs, baskets, matches, drinking water or rice beer, water rice for lunch. They collect hall days and after noon these Sal flower burn and get the Sal seeds and after that they sell to the agent per k.g. eight rupees to twenty rupees.

3.5. A source of Herbal Medicines (Cheramuli)

The jungle provides different type of Herbal medicines and cures to the human being. We can say that Herbal medicines are used from ancient history period to till now days. As they have been living in the mid of forest so that very well squinted with forest each every single things. Mostly these are collected by them. The Hill Kharias also

obtain some shrubs from the forest for use in brewing liquor and making it more alcoholic. The Hill Kharias are knowledgeable about many herbal medicines. The Similipal hill and other forest area of Mayurbhanj district are full of various types of medicinal herbs and the Hill Kharias are very much acquainted with these herbs medicines. Being far away from urban centres and having very little touch with the outside world they make use of the herbal medicine to cure their ailments. The roots, leafs, tubers, herbs, insects and animals found their food items, Barks and seed of a number of trees like *Ashok*, *Sunari*, *Arjun*, *patalgaruda*, *Sal*, *kalibuhu*. etc., are collected in large quantity by them and sell to any nearest local market or businessmen.¹⁶ In the recent time have been found/ observed that bypresent scholars have been collecting different types of ivy (In the regional language call lat, *Dudhilata* or *Dudhinani*), and sell to the agents. Who is supply to the company. They don't know about that thing how to use in the medicine line only they supply to the agent and get some earn of their industries. Charkali fruit (*Tahrav*) is also collected during the month of summer seasons. When fruit is ripe at that time they collect and washed by water then dry in the sun shine after dry that fruit then agent comes to their home and take that fruits.

3.6. Firewood (Katho)

The Hill Kharias also obtain dry wood from the jungle for use as fuel and firewood. They also sell fire wood from the jungle to other proximate people. They went to jungle at around 7 am. and came back home around 12 to 1 pm. They fasten into different size and make them into small bundles. Bundles of firewood size wise prices. Yet according to them one bundle from least 50 rupees to maximum 100 rupees per bundles. They go to market/town for the sell in the morning or afternoon. Each bundle gets some money. Firewood are used as fuel for cooking purpose as well. It gives economy support when a head load of wood is sold in the market or to the neighbouring non-tribal village in the winter season the people burn fuel wood at the centre to protect them from heavy cold. All over the year they collect fire wood from the nearby forest and this fire wood sell near the villages or near the market and collection some money maintain their family life or livelihood.¹⁷

3.7. Mahua flower and Mahuaseeds

The jungle is a full of Mahua trees. Mahua plants have the great economic importance support to the Hill Kharias. It is collected during month of March and April. Since long the absolute necessity of Mahua is felt by the Hill Kharias their day by day life. Both flower and fruits are used as food material as well its seed is also used for extraction of oil. Well to do families prepare very nice staple food out of flower & its fruits are used a vegetables for curry which is very tasteful. The Hill Kharias collect in a group. They fetch in a basket and make it dry in the sun shine and preserver it for future or take it to local market to sell. The main purpose of storing the *Mahua* flower is to prepare countryliquor (*Desimada*, *Mahuli*). Though it is prohibited by the Government, still the people prepare it secretly. This liquor not only brings temporary romantic situation and in raising individual status. Mahua fruit is not as useful as its flower but the ripe fruit is eaten and its seed is used for making oil. This oil is very often used for preparation of food or anoint on their body. Materials it has many uses also in traditional occasional. Mahua flower and seed sell near the daily market (*Hata*) or to agents. This is also of their seasonally income sources.

3.8. Kendu leaves and fruits

Kendu leaf and fruits are also collected from the Similipal forest or nearest forest or plane lands area by the Hill Kharias. It leafs play not only vital role or support to the economy life of the Hill kharias but also other tribal groups people of the Mayurbhanj district, Odisha state, *Kendu* leafs not only Mayurbhanj district but also other district of Odisha which district more than living tribal people of the state. The Kendu trees are called Blackwood (*Indian ebony*), Kendu leaf is used for preparing *Bidis* (*an Indigenous cigarette*), with an increase in the demand of *Bidis* (leafs cigarette),¹⁸ basically they have been collected Kendu leaf in month of April and May each every year. After collect this leafs then they tie bundle, per bundle twenty leafs then take to the near agent who is collect lot of leaf then he also supply to the large agents or *Bidi* manufactures or *Bidi* company (leafs cigarette company). One thousands (1000) kendu leafs 20-40 rupees only. But now-a-days other tribal people also collect this leafs. They get some money and spend their own business. Ripe *Kendu* fruits are also collected by them, that ripe fruits is very syrupy, it is seasonally fruits in the years so that all people found to eaten. This ripe fruits is supplied to the local weekly markets (*Hato*) or any tribal areas and also sell the neighbouring village or daily market, and get some money. It's also one type of seasonally economic supports for their livelihoods.¹⁹

3.9. Mushroom (Chhatu)

Mushrooms also crucial forest resources of the Hill Kharias. The collection of Mushroom is through an actual collective activity with the Hill Kharias during the rainy season and Winter Season.²⁰ Basically in rainy Season and Winter Season different kinds of Mushroom are collected from their nearest forest. They also collect different type of Mushroom for own use and also for sale purpose in the neighbouring villages, daily Market, Weekly Market and they earn much money. They collect varieties Mushroom. These are: *Patra Chhatu*, *Ahila Chhatu*, *Porob Chhatu*, *Bali Chhatu* (*sand Mushroom*), *Rutka Chhatu* (*Bhuyi Rutka*, *Uihunka Chhatu*, *Tree Chhatu*)²¹ etc. In the modern society each everything is possible for the human being so like that last few years have been seen of the product of modernity Mushroom or cultivated Mushroom, this Mushroom is available in the market all day in the years and cultivated mushroom is not the better than the forest mushroom. Forest Mushroom also has been gone down Influence of the modern Mushroom or cultivated Mushroom, so that few Hill Kharias/tribals seasonally income sources which has been directly or indirectly affected of the Hill Kharias. Yet we can say that Mushroom collection and selling is the mostly living part of life of the Similipal Hill kharias.

3.10. Broom Stick

Broom sticks were also collecting by Hill Kharias. This is most need for each every family. Without broom can't clean to the houses. Since long years ago the Hill Khariashad been supplied to the other nearest people. But recently they don't collect Broom stick. Because of lots of modern Broom or varieties Boom and very expensive prices available in the market. Therefore it was also one miniature income sources of the Hill Kharias.

3.11. Greens (Saga)

Some Hill Kharia people also collect varieties type of greens from different place of forest. They collect for eating and sell in neighbouring villages. Greens are collect different season not one season in a year. These greens

are: *Susunda Saga, Bana-Buitalu, Podagali, Gari, Pitasaga, Matha Saga, Saru Saga, Mamudi Saga, Mati Saga, Kanta Sagas*.²²

3.12. Roots/Tuber

The Hill Kharias are closely acquainted with forest. They go to forest from child to old man for collected varieties roots /Tubers²³. These things are collected basically winter season and other season also in the year. These things are: *Mandei Alu, Bayan Alu, Pitalu, Kanta Alu, Chun Alu, Tambalu, Tunga Alu, Kosah Alu*,²⁴ etc.

3.13. Fruits

Forest product was the actual vital source of livelihood of the Hill Kharias of Mayurbhanj. The settlements of Hill Kharias are found be surrounded by a large number of hill or forest. In the forests, Tamarind was the most important of all the items of forest products. The Tamarind trees adjacent the forest or villages were considered as community things. Those trees were leased out to non-tribal, the money thus collected is utilised for organizing the festivals, celebration of village. Though, in the lease arrangement, a condition that only Hill Kharia people are working for gathering of Tamarind trees and they are also given half of it. And also so many different forest fruits collected in the different seasonally. These forest fruits also different seasonally collected by them. Such as: *Banakundri, Gilaphala, Mango, Charkali, Siali Manji, Jackfruit, (Panas), Jamu, Dimiri*.²⁵ Forest products were the chief source of earnings for the Hill Kharias of Mayurbhanj.

3.14. Insect (JhodiPuka, Kalaypuka)

Jhodipuka is one type insect. These insect were eaten by them and other tribal people too such as –Santal, Ho, Munda and other tribal people. Insect body structure is small and black colour. The insect or *puka* are found in during the Rainy season in Month of May and June. Which days rain on the next day in the morning time these insect or *Puka* are collected by them from the white ant hill (*Uihunka*). After the collection they are taken for selling near tribal villages. They are selling like barter (exchange system). Such as if they give to one k. g. *Jhodi Puka*, they will give half k.g. rice etc. this system is very interesting for the Hill Kharias²⁶

3.15. Red ant (Kurkuti)

Like other forest things this is also another slight income sources. *Kurkuti* is one type things looking like other ants. It's live on the leaf of trees. They collect from forest different seasons in the year. *Kurkuti* are eaten as curry with rice water²⁷. It is very tasty items for eating. And they sell near daily market. (*Hata*), neighbour villages.

3.16. Lizards (Godhi), Snakes (Dhamana Sapo)

Hunting and gathering was/is part of life of the Hill Khairas and also other primitive tribes. This is very ancient traditional indigenous method is going on till today. They are very much love to hunting any forest animals. Likely when they go to forest for hunting occasionally four or seven men join together. When this is done the collection after that they equally divided. The Lizards²⁸ are use as curry and eat with water rice. The skin of the snake and lizards is sold to many of the other persons and the much caste who visit their hamlet for their purpose.

3.17. Sabai Grass

Basically, Sabai Grass is regarded as main source of income of Hill Kharias of Mayurbhanj. The Sabai Grass is produced for the manufacturing of different customer goods like ropes, paper, mat, carpets, etc. Another most significant that paper is made from the Sabai Grass. The collection of Sabai grass confirms the financial progress of Hill Kharias due to the impact of modernization. Sabai Grass and its productions of this region have been usually accepted in different Indian markets. Most of the people of Odisha choose to the ropes of Mayurbhanj made out of the Sabai Grass.²⁹ The Sabai Grass cultivation is the chief livelihood of the tribals of Eastern part of Mayurbhanj district i.e. Baripada, Suliapada, Kaptipada, Udual and Rasgovindpur blocks. Most of the villagers of the above blocks depend on the Sabai Grass rope making as their economic subsistence. They sell per kg. From 25 to 55 rupees in the local market or local traders. This is also most income sources of the Hill Kharias of Mayurbhanj district. The present scholar during the field work he observed that Hill Kharia people are an able to Sabai Grass rope making from 1kg to 5 kg. Per day and they dry in the sun shine after that they take into the local market. Except Mayurbhanj Sabai Grass rope making is not seen in Odisha.

IV. CONCLUSION

We conclude that it is found that even after seventy three India's Independence the Hill Kharias are poor in awareness and their economic backwardness have not been changed. The Hill Kharias do not have any more develop still now due to their backwardness. In the present study or observed that still now-a-days some Hill Kharias have been connecting by the traditional method of the livelihoods or collection of the varieties forest resources from the nearest forests. Still today they have not more interested in the cultivations. They sell the forest produces in the nearby markets for earning their livelihood. Still some Hill Kharias old men have been going to Similipal National Park for collection of minor forest resources as described earlier and the present authors have observed it during the field work. Hill Kharia people of Padagarh, Durdura, Matiagarh, Kendumundi, Godgadia villages of the Jashipur block were going to forest for the collection of different produces. They regularly collect honey, resin, sal leaf and seeds, herbal plants, fire wood, mahua flower and seeds, kendu leaf, mushrooms, broom sticks, greens, tuber, fruits, insects, red ants, lizards, sabaigrass, etc. These forest produces are the main sources of the livelihood of Hilli Kharias of Mayurbhanj of Odisha. Now a days, some of the Hilli Kharias have been starting change of their life style slowly due to the influence of the modernity. Like some Hill Kharias are not going to forest for the resource collection. Owing of such, as new generation people fell shy/ shame and also some reasons alike enter into forest prohibited by rules of Regulation of the Government of Central or State. We may say that due to lack of awareness or education it can not be possible to develop the socio-economic life of Hill Kharias, In fact, proper education is a mirror of the society, through the education everything would be change to the Hill Kharia society. It is known from the empirical study that without awareness or education, economy life of the Hill Kharias can not be developed. Still now some areas of Hill Kharia Community, the people do not know value of education. Governments of both Centre and state have provided lot of developmental schemes especially for them such as one Girls Education Complex was established at Angarpada Village in Jashipur Block under HKMDA, Jashipur with Support from MOTA, Govt. of India and ST & SC Development Department, Odisha. In the Year 2007 -2008. From that year Hill Kharia and Mankidia or Birhor students have been studying continuously. Since many years ago they followed the traditional

system of economy. At present nearest villages, markets are also found to be established and Hill Kharia people want to change their economic life style like other tribal people. The present scholars have found new generation of Hill Kharias who have been going to out of states for earning money. Really, the traditional economy of Hill Kharias of Mayurbhanj is going to be changed due to the impact modernization. On the whole, the economic subsistence based on forest products of the Hill Kharias of Mayurbhanj is one of the important aspects of tribal economy of Odisha in Eastern India.

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