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NAVIGATING THE DICHOTOMY: THE STRUGGLES OF TRIBAL YOUTH IN KORAPUT DISTRICT, ODISHA, AMIDST MODERN URBANIZATION

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ABSTRACT :

This article delves into the intricate struggles faced by tribal youth in Koraput District, Odisha, as they grapple with the forces of modern urbanization. It explores the clash between traditional tribal lifestyles and the rapid urbanization sweeping through their communities, highlighting the socio-economic, cultural, and psychological challenges encountered by the youth. Drawing on qualitative data and personal narratives, this article aims to shed light on the multifaceted nature of their experiences and proposes avenues for addressing their unique needs.



KEY WORDS: Koraput Tribal Youth, Dichotomy, Struggles.

INTRODUCTION

Koraput District, situated in the southern part of Odisha, India, is a region of immense geographical diversity and cultural richness. Nestled amidst the Eastern Ghats mountain range, Koraput is renowned for its lush greenery, picturesque landscapes, and diverse tribal communities. Spanning an area of approximately 8,807 square kilometers, the district is bordered by the states of Andhra Pradesh to the south and Chhattisgarh to the west, with the Rayagada District to its east.

Koraput District in Odisha, India, is home to a multitude of tribal communities, each with its own distinct cultural heritage, traditions, and socio-economic characteristics. These indigenous groups, including the Bonda, Gadaba, Paraja, and Kondh, have inhabited the region for centuries, contributing to its cultural vibrancy and diversity. This article focuses on the plight of the youth from these tribes which is about 50.60% of the total population. They grapple with the modern urbanization and the disillusioned by the rapid changes and development around them.

The data collected are from selected youths including the elders aged between 18 to 65 years old. To determine the ample size needed to obtain a sample of 300 from a targeted population of 8000 with 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. A purposive sampling was used to select participants who could provide valuable insights into the research. The criteria here used are the Inclusion and exclusion criteria, that is, those eligible and ineligible to participate in the study. They are aged above 18 years of age in the inclusion criteria and ineligible are below 18 years age. The tools used for data collection are, surveys, interviews and focus group discussion through which the demographic information, adult participation in community development, urban interaction and

technology adoption could be studied and moreover the variant behavior of the youth population could be determined.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

A study was conducted by M.K Mahanty and A.K Nayak in 2016 titled 'Tribal culture and livelihood and sustainable development in Odisha: A Historical Review'. This study explores the historical trajectory of livelihood in Odisha, India using a mixed-methods approach. It highlights the traditional livelihood activities and emphasizes the importance of culturally sensitive approaches to sustainable development.

A study was conducted by R. Mishra and S. Mahanti in 2019 titled 'Decentralized Governance and tribal Development: A Comparative Study of Participatory Approaches in Odisha and Madhya Pradesh.' This comparative study examines decentralized governance models in tribal and development, focusing on participatory approaches in Odisha Madhya Pradesh, India. The conclusion underscores the need for policy coherence and collaborative efforts to address the multifaceted challenges facing tribal communities.

A study was conducted by S. Mehta and V. Patel in 2017 titled 'Participatory approaches to Health and Education in Tribal communities: Lessons Learned and Future and Directions'. The conclusion of the study underscores the importance of holistic approaches that integrate health and education interventions within broader development frameworks.

A study was conducted by R. Gupta and S. Sharma in 2018 titled 'Impact of Urbanization on tribal Livelihoods: A case study of selected Tribes in India'. Discussion highlights the importance of policy interventions and community-based initiatives to address the vulnerabilities and capitalize on the opportunities presented by the urbanization for tribal livelihoods.

A study was conducted by A. Sharma and S. Patel in 2018 titled 'Impact of Technological Adoption on Socio-economic Change: A study of tribal communities in India'. This study examines the impact of technological adoption on socio-economic change within tribal communities in India. The conclusion of the study underscores the need for targeted interventions and inclusive policies to harness the potential of technology for sustainable development and social inclusion in tribal regions.

A study was conducted by Dr. Mohsin Uddin, titled Educational Schemes and Tribal Welfare: A Study of Mandlar District, 2013, in which the author emphasis the importance of education for the tribal youth who have the tendency to follow the old way of life ignoring the importance of education and then remain ignorant about the outside world. He suggests that some types of incentives should be made available for the youth to get motivated and then continue with their studies. These types of measures by the government will help the education of the tribal youth

OBJECTIVES:

To investigate the plight of the youth of Koraput Tribal Youth in midst of rapid urbanization

Hypothesis:

Koraput tribal youth can become competent with rapid urbanization if provided with basic skills through education, employment.

Research Methodology and Research Design:

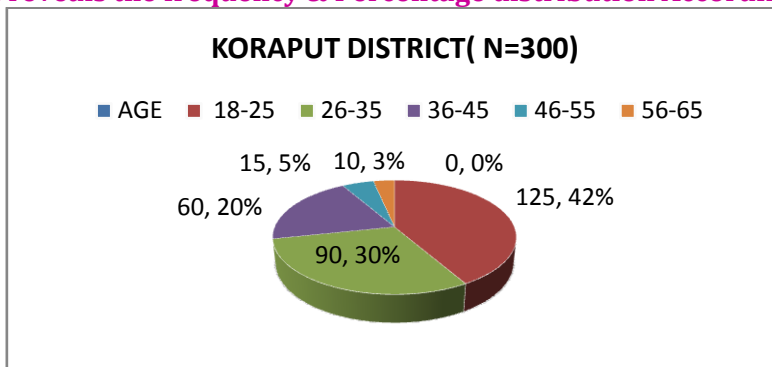
The research adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods to gather comprehensive data from the youth in their participation in village development.

Tools:

The data collected are from selected Koraput tribal population including the elders aged between 18 to 65 years old. To determine the ample size needed to obtain a sample of 300 from a targeted population of 8000 with 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. A purposive sampling was used to select participants who could provide valuable insights into the research. The

criteria here used are the Inclusion and exclusion criteria, that is, those eligible and ineligible to participate in the study. They are aged above 18 years of age in the inclusion criteria and ineligible are below 18 years age. The tools used for data collection are, surveys, interviews and focus group discussion.

Table 1 reveals the frequency & Percentage distribution According to Age



Research Methodology and Research Design:

The research adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods to gather comprehensive data from the youth in their participation in village development.

Impact of Modern Urbanization on Tribal Youth in Koraput District:

The rapid urbanization occurring in Koraput District has significantly influenced the lives of tribal youth, leading to notable changes in their lifestyle, livelihoods, and community dynamics. Understanding these effects is pivotal for addressing the challenges and opportunities faced by tribal youth amidst the urban transition. Urbanization has introduced tribal youth to modern amenities, altering their traditional lifestyle patterns. Increased access to technology, media, and consumer goods has led to shifts in cultural practices and preferences. Adoption of urban clothing styles, dietary habits, and recreational activities among tribal youth reflects the influence of urbanization on their cultural identity and social behavior.

Traditional livelihoods like agriculture, forestry, and handicrafts, which were once the mainstay of tribal communities, have been impacted by urbanization. Many tribal youth have migrated to urban areas in search of alternative employment opportunities. Urbanization has reshaped traditional community structures and dynamics, impacting social integration and cultural preservation among tribal youth. Migration to urban centers often leads to the dilution of social ties and networks within tribal communities.

The process of urbanization can have psychosocial implications for tribal youth, including feeling of alienation, cultural dislocation, and identity crisis. Adaptation to urban lifestyles and exposure to new social norms may lead to conflicts between traditional values and modern influences.

Challenges Faced by Tribal Youth:

Tribal youth in Koraput District encounter a myriad of socio-economic, cultural, and psychological challenges as they navigate the transition from rural to urban environments. Understanding these challenges is crucial for devising effective interventions and support mechanisms tailored to their unique needs and circumstances.

Limited Educational Opportunities: Many tribal youth face barriers to accessing quality education, including inadequate school infrastructure, shortage of qualified teachers, and linguistic barriers.

Unemployment and Underemployment: In urban areas, tribal youth often struggle to find stable employment due to lack of skills, limited job opportunities, and discrimination in the labor market.

Economic disparities persist among tribal youth, with many living below the poverty line and lacking access to basic amenities and financial resources. The process of urbanization often leads to the erosion of traditional cultural practices and values among tribal youth, who may feel disconnected from their cultural heritage and ancestral roots.

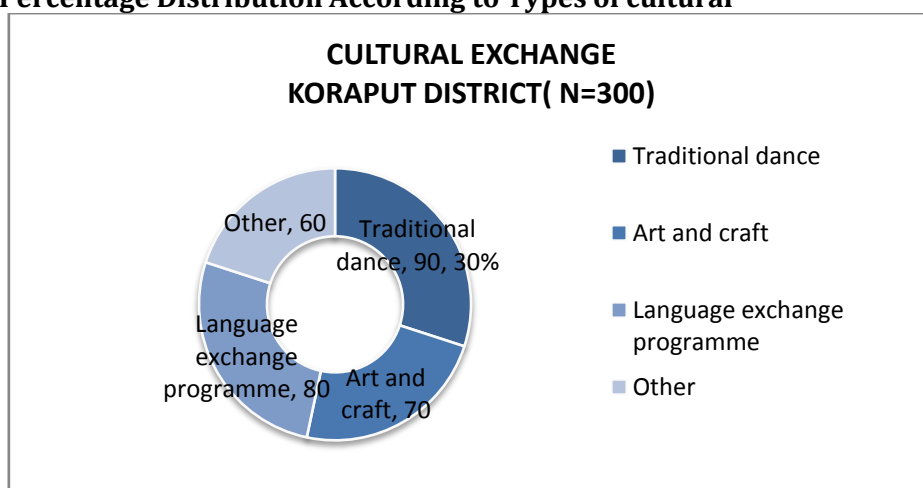
Tribal youth may encounter discrimination and prejudice in urban environments based on their ethnic identity, language, and socio-economic status, leading to feelings of exclusion and marginalization. Tribal youth navigating urban lifestyles may experience conflicts between traditional customs and modern influences, posing challenges to identity formation and social integration.

Tribal youth undergoing the transition from rural to urban environments may experience an identity crisis as they grapple with conflicting cultural norms, societal expectations, and personal aspirations. The stress of adaptation, social isolation, and economic insecurity can contribute to mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, and substance abuse among tribal youth. Migration to urban areas may disrupt familial bonds and support systems, leading to feelings of loneliness, homesickness, and emotional distress among tribal youth.

Preserving cultural identity is paramount for tribal youth in Koraput District amidst the tide of modernization. However, they encounter significant struggles in maintaining their cultural heritage and the sense of belonging as urbanization reshapes their lives. Understanding these challenges underscores the importance of cultural preservation efforts and support mechanisms tailored to the needs of tribal youth. Cultural traditions and practices serve as a foundation for tribal youth's sense of identity and belonging, connecting them to their community's rich history and collective memory. Cultural preservation fosters social cohesion and solidarity among tribal youth, providing a sense of belonging and support network in times of adversity. Many cultural practices are intertwined with nature and the environment, instilling the values of sustainability and ecological stewardship among tribal youth.

Urbanization often leads to the erosion of traditional cultural practices and values among tribal youth, who are exposed to dominant mainstream culture and consumerism. Tribal youth may experience a disconnect between the traditions of their elders and the realities of modern life, leading to tensions and conflicts within families and communities. The clash between traditional customs and modern influences can trigger an identity crisis among tribal youth, who may struggle to reconcile their cultural heritage with the pressures of urban living.

Frequency & Percentage Distribution According to Types of cultural



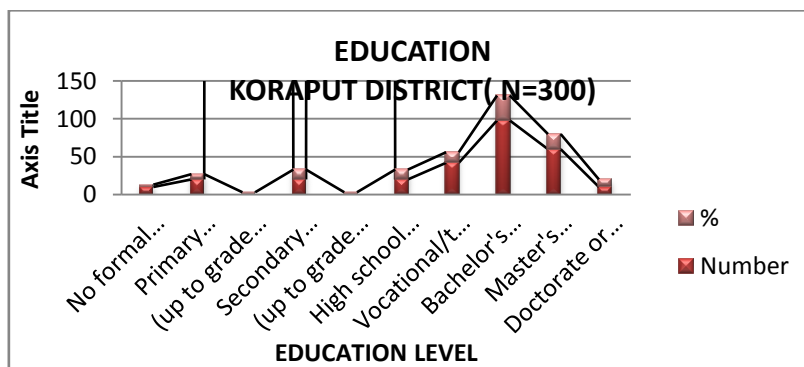
Access to quality education and employment:

Access to quality education and employment opportunities is critical for the socio-economic empowerment of tribal youth in urban areas. However, disparities and barriers to access often hinder their educational attainment and economic mobility. Analyzing these challenges sheds light on the

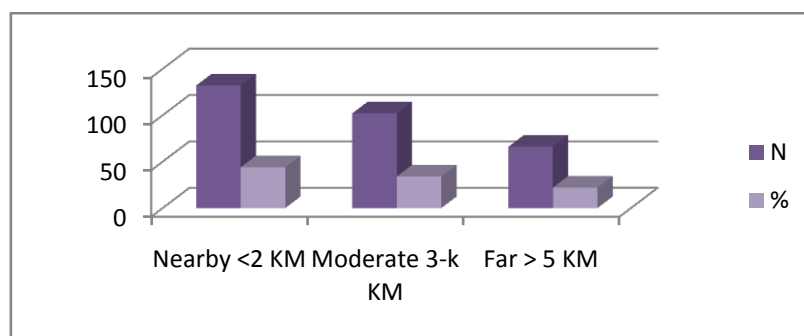
systemic inequalities faced by tribal youth and underscores the need for targeted interventions to address them. Urban areas may lack adequate educational infrastructure, including schools, colleges, and vocational training centers, limiting the availability of educational opportunities for tribal youth.

Even when educational institutions are present, they may suffer from poor infrastructure, shortage of qualified teachers, and inadequate resources, compromising the quality of education provided to tribal youth. Language barriers and cultural insensitivity in educational settings can alienate tribal youth, hindering their academic performance and educational attainment.

Frequency & Percentage Distribution According to Education level

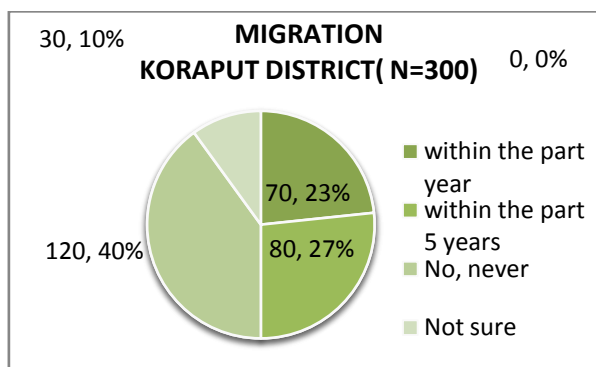
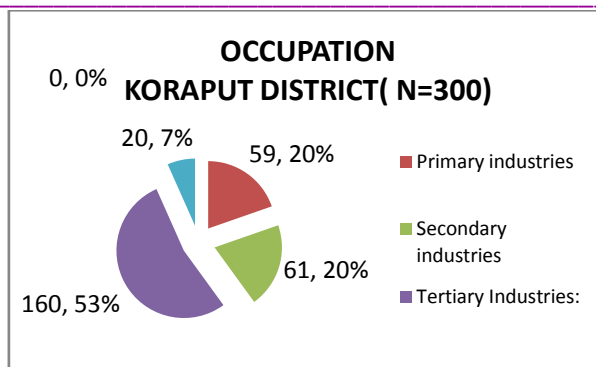


Frequency & Percentage Distribution According to Distance to Educational Institutions



Tribal youth often face challenges in accessing formal employment opportunities in urban areas, leading to high rates of unemployment and underemployment. Discriminatory hiring practices, lack of skills, and social stigma based on ethnicity or tribal identity can limit the employment prospects of tribal youth, perpetuating economic disparities. Many tribal youth are forced to rely on informal sector jobs, characterized by low wages, precarious working conditions, and limited social protection, exacerbating poverty and vulnerability. Tribal settlements in remote or marginalized areas may have limited access to educational institutions and employment centers, exacerbating disparities in access to opportunities. Tribal youth often lack access to vocational training and skill development programs that are essential for enhancing their employability and economic empowerment. Gender inequalities further compound the challenges faced by tribal youth, particularly young women, who may encounter additional barriers to accessing education and employment opportunities.

Frequency & Percentage Distribution According to Occupation Frequency & Percentage Distribution According to Migration

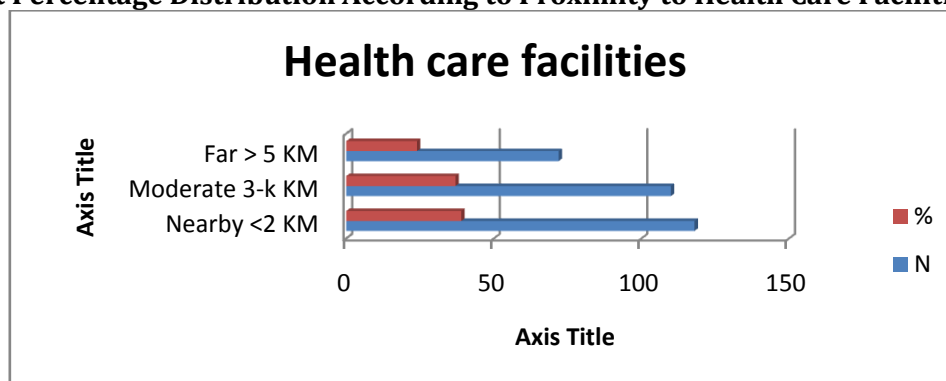


Healthcare and Well-being of Tribal Youth in Koraput District

Limited Healthcare Infrastructure: Many tribal areas in Koraput District lack basic healthcare facilities, including hospitals, clinics, and trained medical personnel, leading to challenges in accessing timely and adequate healthcare services. Remote or mountainous terrain in tribal areas may further exacerbate healthcare access barriers, as transportation infrastructure is often inadequate or non-existent, making it difficult for tribal youth to reach healthcare facilities. Cultural norms, beliefs, and language differences may act as barriers to healthcare seeking behavior among tribal youth, leading to underutilization of healthcare services and delays in seeking treatment.

Tribal youth, especially women and children, are at a higher risk of maternal and child mortality due to limited access to maternal and child healthcare services, nutritional deficiencies, and poor sanitation practices. Communicable diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, and waterborne illnesses are more prevalent among tribal youth in Koraput District, partly due to inadequate sanitation facilities and limited access to clean drinking water. Tribal youth may face mental health challenges such as depression, anxiety, and substance abuse, stemming from socio-economic disparities, cultural displacement, and acculturation stress.

Frequency & Percentage Distribution According to Proximity to Health Care Facilities



Policy Implications and Recommendations for Tribal Youth in Koraput District

Addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by tribal youth in Koraput District requires a holistic approach that integrates socio-economic development, cultural preservation, and community empowerment. The following policy interventions and recommendations aim to mitigate the struggles faced by tribal youth and promote their well-being and socio-economic advancement:

a. Integrated Development Programs

Implement integrated development programs that focus on improving access to education, healthcare, and livelihood opportunities for tribal youth in Koraput District.

Promote multi-sectoral collaboration among government agencies, civil society organizations, and community stakeholders to design and implement comprehensive development initiatives tailored to the needs of tribal youth.

b. Education and Skill Development

Enhance access to quality education by upgrading school infrastructure, recruiting qualified teachers, and providing scholarships and incentives to tribal youth in Koraput District. Expand vocational training programs and skill development initiatives that align with the needs of urban industries and promote economic empowerment among tribal youth.

c. Healthcare Access and Awareness

Strengthen healthcare infrastructure in tribal areas by establishing more primary health centers, mobile clinics, and telemedicine services to improve healthcare access for tribal youth. Conduct health education campaigns and awareness programs targeting tribal youth and communities to promote preventive healthcare practices, maternal and child health, and mental well-being.

d. Cultural Preservation and Empowerment

Support community-led cultural preservation initiatives that promote the revitalization of traditional practices, languages, and art forms among tribal youth in Koraput District. Foster cultural sensitivity and inclusivity in governance and development policies to ensure the representation and participation of tribal youth in decision-making processes.

e. Gender Equity and Social Inclusion

Address gender disparities and promote social inclusion by implementing policies and programs that empower tribal girls and women through education, skill development, and leadership training. Foster a supportive and inclusive environment that recognizes and respects the diverse identities, perspectives, and contributions of tribal youth in Koraput District.

By implementing these policy recommendations and fostering community engagement, stakeholders can empower tribal youth in Koraput District to overcome their struggles, realize their potential, and contribute to the sustainable development of their communities and society at large.

CONCLUSION:

Tribal youth in Koraput District are not just passive recipients of development interventions but active agents of change and progress. As they have the innate qualities of valiant features, it is to be taken into consideration they are given the opportunity to develop themselves. The programs like tribal youth leadership, skill development, health awareness, digital literacy could enhance their competency with the urban culture. The need to promote tribal cultural heritage centers, community resource centers, youth empowerment forums, partnership with NGO and civil society would give them hope for brighter future. By recognizing their resilience, potential, and contributions, and by continuing to support their growth and development amidst modern urbanization, we can build a more inclusive and equitable society where every individual, regardless of background, has the opportunity to thrive and succeed.

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