

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE OF PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TRIBAL GROUPS OF ODISHA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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The tribal population in Odisha and in the country as a whole is the most deprived and vulnerable community that faces severe economic exclusion. The state of Odisha occupies a unique position in the tribal map of India having 62 scheduled tribes including 13 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PTGs) with a population of over 8.15 million constituting 22.13% of the population of the state. The present paper elucidates the income and expenditure profile of three PTGs namely Dongria, Kandha, Kutia Kandha and Lanjia Saora. A total of 800 households from KBK and Kandhamal districts were randomly selected and head of the households were interviewed for data collection. The information was gathered thorough interview using pretested, structured schedule. The finding reveal that the annual income of a household is high among Lanjia Saora followed by Dongria Kandha and Kutia Kandha. But Per Capital Income is comparatively more among Dongria Kandha than Lanjia Saora and Kutia Kandha. Out of total income contribution of agriculture is almost same among Dongria Kandha (64%) and Lanjia Saora (63%) and relatively less among Kutia Kandha (44%). This paper reveals that the primitive tribal communities are lagging behind the mainstream population with respect to income and expenditure and thus there is an urgent need to provide income generating activities to improve their socio economic status.

Keywords : Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group, Kutia Kandha, Dongria Kandha, Lanjia Saora, Income, Expenditure

BACKGROUND

India is home to almost half the tribal population of the world. Tribals are characterized by a distinctive culture, primitive traits, and socio-economic backwardness. The tribals of India, constituting 9.20% of the total population, belong to around 698 communities or clans (census 2011). There are certain tribal communities who are having low level of literacy, declining or stagnant population, and pre-agricultural level of technology and economically backward. 75 such groups in 15 States/UTs have been identified and have been categorized as Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs). Despite economic growth in India, tribals are remain at the lowest stratum of the society due to various factors like geographical and cultural isolation, low levels of literacy, primitive occupations, and extreme levels of poverty. There are various efforts have been made during the plan periods for their Socio-economic development. Though there are several initiatives by the Central and State Governments, mostly they are not reaching the target groups or the development efforts do not match the need of these groups. The eleventh plan of Government of India has 'inclusive growth' as its objective. This implies that the economy should not only maintain the tempo of growth but also spread the benefits of growth to all sections of the population and geographical regions of the country. This change in approach is particularly important for the hilly regions of the country, as they constantly struggle with underdevelopment, even when the rest of the economy is doing well. Development planning in India has attempted for Tribal development by focusing on food security, health, education, employment and income generation, however failed to achieve the required objectives. This creates major challenges for the policy maker. In the back drop of such lop-

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sided development, the paper attempts to understand the extent of disparity in terms of income and expenditure of primitive tribal groups of Odisha and the challenges they are facing and to explore possibilities and options for development policies and initiatives.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

Traditionally, “development” refers to the capacity of a national economy to generate and sustain an annual increase in its gross national product (GNP). In the 1950s and 1960s a large number of the Third World countries, including India, achieved their growth targets, but the levels of living and quality of life of the masses for the most part remained unchanged (Todaro 1985). This somber situation caused the “dethronement” of the GNP from the definition of development. In 1970s economic development was redefined in terms of elimination of poverty, inequality, unemployment, disease and illiteracy (Seers 1969). Despite glowing accounts of how well the Indian economy has performed in recent years, India’s traditionally disadvantaged groups particularly tribal remain mired in acute poverty. During the British rule, when the Indian economy as a whole was near stagnant the tribal areas were generally kept secluded and out of the normal process of administration and economic action. After independence, the India Constitution adopted many provisions to provide them with special status and parliament through various protective legislations made conscious efforts to safe guard their interest. Planning Commission of India through its development initiative adopted Tribal SUB Plan (TSP) approach and under Panchayati Raj Institutions the Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act. 1996 (PESA) was legislated. Ever since the Fifth Five Year Plan India has been initiating and operationalising a series of tribal development strategies and programmes/schemes. In most parts of India, the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes continue to be victims of social inequality and economic deprivation. Historically, the Schedule Tribes have had a distinct culture, language and social organization. They practiced hunting, food gathering and shifting cultivation and lived in the river valleys and forest regions. The economic situation of scheduled Tribe revealed significant disparities in deprivation in terms of poverty and its factors like access to capital assets, education, employment, wage earning, health status and political participation. Exclusion in their case is in the form of denial of right to resources of livelihood and unintended and intended consequences of societal processes and policies of the Government which, inflicted considerable deprivation and poverty among them (Thorat 2000). This, according to Sen (2000) is ‘active and passive exclusion’. Active exclusion can be through deliberate policies of the Government, or by any other willful agents who exclude others from similar opportunities, while in passive exclusion and deprivation, there is no deliberate attempt to exclude. The Scheduled Tribes also suffer from ‘constitutive relevance’ of exclusion, which arises because of their inability to relate to others, and to take part in the life of the community, and indirectly results in impoverishment (Sen 2000). More than half of the tribal families (54.14 per cent) are below the poverty line (BPL). They are among the most deprived and marginalized. 63.5 per cent of the tribal households do not have access to electricity, 47.8 per cent of the tribal villages are not electrified, 84.8 per cent of the tribal households do not have drinking water source within their premises, 83 per cent of the tribal households do not have toilets, and 75.6 per cent of the households do not have permanent houses. They have low purchasing power, public services are weak in the tribal villages, and the private sector is unwilling to invest. According to Ira Gang’s findings, scheduled caste and scheduled tribe households accounted for 16.5 percent and 8.1 percent, respectively, of India’s population, but accounted for 43.3 percent of the rural poor in 1993 and 1994. The proportions of poor scheduled caste and scheduled tribe households were 49.2 and 50.3 percent, respectively, as compared with a proportion of 33.1 percent among rural non-scheduled households. A large fraction of the difference in poverty incidence between scheduled caste and non-scheduled households (62.5

percent) is due to differences in characteristics such as education and occupation, while 37.5 percent is due to differences in returns to these characteristics. Because of such a lop-sided development practice, India's tribal belt is still identified as one of the most underdeveloped regions in the country. Moreover, such backwardness has posed a serious threat to the entire nation in the form of unemployment, poverty and insurgency – all of which are interwoven. Now it is the prime task of the policy makers to review the ongoing development strategy and try to evolve one, which ensures inclusion of the excluded through the process of social transformation and development. We observe from practical experience and different studies that the process of development does not provide equal benefits and opportunities to primitive tribal community. Therefore, it becomes necessary to evolve a development strategy that ensures an effective and efficient use of available resources for well being of the tribal community and encourages sharing of development benefits and opportunities in an equitable manner.

PROFILE OF STUDY AREA

Odisha, situated in the eastern coast of India, lies between 17° 49'N to 22° 34' N latitude and 81° 29' E to 87° 29' E longitude which covers 1,55,707 sq. kms, which accounts for 4.74 per cent of total land area of the country and geographically ranks 9th among the Indian states. It occupies a unique position in the tribal map of India for having the largest variety of scheduled tribes. It has a total population of 81, 45,081, which is 22.13% of the state's population and 9.66% of the country's tribal population. They are the most marginal and vulnerable social group in the state (Census 2001). Odisha is the third largest tribal population in the entire country (Economic survey of Odisha, 2009). It has the unique distinction of having 62 different tribal communities and there are 13 sections of tribes in the State who have been identified as "Primitive Tribes". The tribals are mostly inhabitant the western hilly regions of the state, mainly in or in close proximity to forest. 54.41 per cent of the total tribal population lives in the scheduled area and the remaining 45.59 per cent outside the scheduled areas. The Scheduled Tribe population in the State is overwhelmingly rural, with 94.5 per cent residing in villages. District wise distribution of ST population shows that Malkangiri district has the highest proportion of STs (57.4 per cent) followed by Mayurbhanj (56.6 per cent), Rayagada (55.8 per cent) and Nabarangapur (55 per cent). Puri district has the lowest by proportion of STs (0.3 per cent). The major tribes of the state are Kondhs, Gonds, Koyas, Gadabas, Oraon, Juangs, and Santhals. Out of sixty two (62) STs, Khond is the most populous tribe with a population of 1,395,643 constituting 17.1 percent of the total ST population. They live all over the state, but are mainly concentrated in Kondhmal, Koraput, Rayagada, Nabarangpur, Kalahandi and Gajapati districts. Gond is the second largest tribe, having a number of 782,104 and 9.6 per cent share in the total ST population. They are concentrated in Kalahandi, Sambalpur and Koraput. Six other tribes namely, Santhal, Kolha, Munda, Saora, Shabar and Bhottada along with Khond and Gond constitute 64.2 per cent of the total ST population of the State (Data Highlights- Scheduled Tribes, Odisha, and Census 2001)

Out of these 62 tribal groups, 13 have been identified as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group based on the criteria of low literacy, pre-agricultural level of technology, and stagnant or diminishing nature of their population (Annual Report 2008, Ministry of Tribal Affairs). The 13 primitive tribal Groups are Bondo, Chuktia Bhunjia, Didayi, Dongria Kandha, Hill Kharis, Mankirdia, Birhor, Juang, Kutia Kandha, Lanjia Saora, Lodha, Paudi Bhuiyan and the Saora. These tribal communities mostly reside in the Scheduled Areas which account for 44.21 per cent of the total land of the State. They also vary from one another in terms of their language, social structure, territorial affiliation, socio-cultural identity, livelihood sources, and degree of modernisation.

Tribals of Odisha like any other India tribes, live in and depend upon forest. Their interaction with the forest is symbiotic and expressed in two different ways: adaptation to and changing of a given environment. The tribal people have got a heterogeneous cultural pattern with varied economic conditions and activities largely conditioned by ecological settings and their environment. The historical evidence reveals that they associated themselves with the forests which provided them all their day-to-day requirements. Even today, majority of the tribal population in India continue to depend on forests for their day-to-day existence. In addition, the influence of forests is reflected on every aspect of tribal culture. It appears that a comprehensive understanding of their culture can be had by examining it in relation to the forests.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was conducted in Kandhamal and undivided KBK districts of Odisha covering three Primitive Tribal communities i.e. Kutia Kandha, Dongria Kandha and Lanjia Saora. A total of 800 household were interviewed covering 49 revenue villages for data collection. Interview method and structured & unstructured questionnaire methods were used to gather information from the informants. Simultaneously, Group discussion and informal interview methods have been used. Observation has been conducted through semi-participant methods.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Among the 13 Ethnos-Cultural Vulnerable Tribal Groups, Dongria Kandha and Lanjia Saora are mainly found in the interior and relatively isolated pocket of Rayagada district where as Kutia Kandha in Kandhamal district of Odisha. More over Kutia Kandha, Dongria Kandha and Lanjia Saora are spread over in an area of 300Sq Kms, 115 Sq Kms and 35Sq Kms respectively. Dongria habitats are found at 1000ft to 5000ft above sea level as compared to Kutia Kandha (2225ft) and Lanjia Saora (2000ft). Dongria Kandha and Kutia Kandha had been given special attention through Micro Project during 5th Plan where as Micro Project for Lanjia Saora was grounded during 6th Plan period.

The *Dongria Kandha*, members of the *Kandha* tribe of Odisha, are found in the Niyamgiri hill ranges of the Eastern Ghats and particularly in the Rayagada and Koraput districts. *Dongria Kandhas* speak a language, called the *kuvi*, which is of Dravidian linguistic ancestry (Aparajita, 1994). Most of the Dongria families are dominated by nuclear families. They are very much addicted to drink local wine, *Salap*. The Dongria Kandha associated with many occupations. They are expert horticulturists and grow jackfruit, mango, pineapple, banana, citrus fruits, ginger, and turmeric. Besides horticulture, they earn their livelihood through shifting cultivation along hill slopes, collection of materials from forests, animal husbandry wage-earning and trade and barter. The theological pantheon of the *Dongria Kandha* has the '*Dharni penu*', the earth goddess, at the apex and in addition there are a large number of village deities, ancestral cults, household deities, and spirits. Deities and spirits are propitiated for their blessings, and rituals and ceremonies are observed throughout the year.

The *Kutia Kandha* is a sub-section of the *Kandha* tribal group of Odisha and they are mainly concentrated in Belghar area of the Balliguda subdivision in Kandhamal district. They practice slash-and-burn cultivation, otherwise known as '*podu chas*', and also grow crops in wet cultivation, horticultural plantations, animal husbandry and wage-earning for their livelihood. Patrilineality, patriarchy and patrilocality prevail in *Kutia Kandha* villages. They have nuclear and extended families, lineage, clans and clan exogamy regulates marriage. The secular functionaries are the *Mutha Majhi*, *Pat Majhi*, *Bis Majhi* and *Chhatia*; while the *Jani* is the sacerdotal head. The *Kutia Kandhas* are polytheists and believe in a large number of deities, spirits, supernatural elements, both

benevolent and malevolent. They propitiate their deities and spirits through performance of rituals for their blessings. They observe various ceremonies and festivals throughout the year and perform magico-religious rituals as per the prescription of the *Jani*.

The Saora is one of the major tribes of Odisha and they speak a language, *Sora*, which can be classified under the Austro-Asiatic language family. They are found in almost all districts of the State, but are chiefly concentrated in Gajapati, Rayagada and Ganjam districts. The *Saoras* have been classified into various groups. The *Lanjia Saoras* are the more 'primitive' group and the *Sudha Saoras* are a *Hinduised* acculturated group. The *Saoras* practice shifting, terrace and settled cultivation, collect minor forest produce, pursue animal husbandry, horticulture, and wage earning. The *Saoras* are noted for their iconography, craftsmanship and their rich cultural heritage. The Saora family is patriarchal, patrilocal and patrilineal.

It is found that the traditional tribal society in the study area, is in transition from a mere subsistence earner to a surplus producing one. The transition is however, not obeying any established theory. In the days of market mechanism, the mode of production has also got a drastic change in respect to the functional relationship of various inputs involved in the production process as well as in its distributional aspects¹. From a mere subsistence level of mode of production, the economy as a whole has been reorganized for the market. Thus, generation of personal income has achieved priority among the tribesmen. As revealed from the field investigation nearly 50% of the respondents have vertically shifted their profession i.e. from the traditional agricultural practice to secondary and tertiary sector. The rising literacy level alone is not the only cause of shifting the choice of profession of the tribesmen in the study area as found in the field investigation rather this vertical mobility is a spontaneous result of development of infrastructural setups.

OCCUPATIONAL PATTERN

Occupations in tribal society are broadly divided into agriculture and non-agriculture. The agriculture occupations are two types' namely main and subsidiary occupations. Each group is further divided into own land cultivation, tenant cultivators, agricultural workers, minor forest product collectors, podu cultivators and hunting. The non-agricultural occupations are classified into main and subsidiary and are divided into Government services, educational services and other services such as petty traders, grocery shop owners, and bamboo making.

The table 1 shows that Workforce Participation Rate is 59% among Kutia Kandha followed by 58% among Lanjia Saora and 54% among Dongria Kandha. The PTGs have different occupation for their livelihood. Primarily PTGs were shifting cultivators. But the trend has been changing. Out of the sample survey, 74% households of Lanjia Saora are found as settled cultivators (including tenant cultivators) followed by 47% households of Kutia Kandha and very negligible (1.9%) among Dongria Kandha. 87%, 20% and 10% of households are landless among Dongria Kandha, Kutia Kandha and Lanjia Saora respectively. Small and Marginal farmers constitute 83% among Lanjia Saora, 79% among Kutia Kandha and very low 11% among Dongria Kandha.

The finding of the survey indicates that nearly 83% households of Dongria Kandhas have opted shifting cultivation as their primary occupation followed by 16% households of Kutia Kandha and only 7% of households of Lanjia Saora. NTFPs collection as a primary occupation is found very negligible among Lanjia Saora (0.5%) and high among Kutia Kandha (12.45%) where as it is 8.4% among Dongria Kandha. Wage earning reported high among Kutia Kandha (21.52%) and Lanjia Saora (11.5%) as compared to Dongria Kandha (6.4%).

In secondary occupation NTFPs collection and Wage earning are found to be very important as

52% households of Dongria Kandha, 36.68% of Kutia Kandha and 29% of Lanjia Saora have opted NTFPs collection as secondary occupation. But majority of Lanjia Saora (44%) have opted wage earning as their secondary occupation followed by Dongria Kandha (38%) and Kutia Kandha (17%).

Table 1, Occupation Pattern of Dongria, Lanjia and Kutia Kandha

SI No	Name of the PTGs	Dongria Kandha	Lanjia Saora	Kutia Kandha
1	Workforce Participation Rate	54.5	58.39	58.98
2	Households opted agriculture as Primary Occupation	1.9	74	47.89
3	Landless Households	87.14	10.5	20.07
4	Marginal farmers	8.68	58	71.97
5	Small farmers	2.58	25	7.27
6	Households opted Shifting cultivation as Primary Occupation	83.3	7	16.33
7	Households opted NTFPs collection as Primary Occupation	8.4	0.5	12.35
8	Households opted wage earning as Primary Occupation	6.4	11.5	21.52
9	Households opted NTFP collection as Secondary Occupation	52.09	29	36.68
10	Households opted wage earning as Secondary Occupation	38.26	44	17.36

Source: Field Survey

It is evident from the table that dependency on shifting cultivation and NTFPs collection is comparatively high among Dongria Kandha and Kutia Kandha (sub-section of Kandha) than Lanjia Saora.

Income is the consumption and savings opportunity gained by an entity within a specified time frame, which is generally expressed in monetary term. However, for households and individuals, "income is the sum of all the wages, salaries, profits, interests payments, rents and other forms of earnings received" in a given period of time".

The annual income of a household is high among Lanjia Saora (Rs 24,491) followed by Dongria Kandha (Rs 23,157) and Kutia Kandha (Rs 18,230). But Per Capital Income is comparatively more among Dongria Kandha (Rs 4,320) than Lanjia Saora (Rs 3,973) and Kutia Kandha (Rs 3,240). Out of total income contribution of agriculture is almost same among Dongria Kandha (64%) and Lanjia Saora (63%) and relatively less among Kutia Kandha (44%). It is interesting to reflected that although the investment on agriculture is 6.45% (See the expenditure table), but over all income cash flow from agriculture to the total income of Kutia Kandha is relatively less. It is due to the significant contribution of wage earning and NTFP, especially high market price of Seali leave.

Table 2, Income pattern of Dongria, Lanjia and Kutia Kandha

Sl No	Name of the PTGs	Dongria Kandha	Lanjia Saora	Kutia Kandha
1	Income from Agriculture	63.63%	62.89%	43.58%
2	Income from Wages	8.53%	18.09%	24.02%
3	Income from NTFP	19.06%	9.19%	28.95%
4	Average annual income per households (Rs)	23157	24491	18230
5	Per Capita Income(Rs)	4320	3973	3240
6	Approximate Value of Asset/HH(Rs)	22416	48781	21709

Source: Filed Survey

Collection of Minor Forest Produces (MFP) is one of the integral parts of tribal economy and livelihood. The dense forests of the scheduled areas are endowed with rich minor forest produce. The forests in the sample area are potentially rich and varied items like add leaf, fiber, and fruits, tamarind, myrobalams, broom grass, jack fruits, mahua flowers and seed, Siali leaf and different wild roots are abundantly available. In addition to the minor forest produce, they also collect the edible fruits, roots, tubers and leafy vegetables for their own consumption purpose.

The tribals also collect the firewood for fuel purpose, timber for house construction and making of agricultural wooden implements, furniture and other articles for domestic usage. Among the selected villages only few villages nearer to urban markets collect firewood for marketing purpose.

On the other NTFPs contribute about 29% of income to Kutia Kandha (Mainly Siali leaves collection) followed by Dongria Kandha (19%) and Lanjia Saora (9%). Contribution of Wage earning is 24% to the total income in case of Kutia Kandha where as it is 18% for Lanjia Saora and 9% for Dongria Kandha.

Table 3, Expenditures pattern of Dongria, Lanjia and Kutia Kandha

Sl No	Name of the PTGs	Dongria Kandha	Lanjia Saora	Kutia Kandha
1	Expenditure on food items	37.23	35.28	38.78
2	Average monthly expenditure on food items/HH (Rs)	635	501	588
3	Per Capita monthly expenditure on food items(Rs)	118	81	105
4	Average monthly expenditure /HH(Rs)	1705	1419	1517
5	Per Capita monthly expenditure(Rs)	318	230	270

Source: Field Survey

Expenditure on food article is very from 35% to 39% among all selected PTGs. Average monthly expenditure per household is Rs 635 among Dongria Kandha, Rs 588 among Kutia Kandha and Rs 501 among Lanjia Saora. Per capita expenditure on food items is Rs 118 among Dongria Kandha Rs 105 among Kutia Kandha, and Rs 81 among Lanjia Saora. The general assumption is that the high income groups spend less a compared to relatively low income group, which is quite visible from above.

Average monthly expenditure (Both food and non-food) per household of Dongria Kandha is Rs 1705 as against Rs 1517 of Kutia Kandha and Rs 1419 of Lanjia Saora. Similarly per capita monthly

expenditure is more among Dongria (Rs 318) followed by Kutia Kandha (Rs 270) and Lanjia Saora (Rs 230) (Table 3). Heavy investment on social ceremonies and alcoholism practice increased the expenditure pattern of Dongria Kandha as compared to their counter parts.

Table 4, Annual Expenditures pattern of Dongria, Lanjia and Kutia Kandha

SI No	Heads of Expenditures	Total Expenditure in Percentage		
		Kutia Kandha	Dongria Kandha	Lanjia Saora
A	Food items	38.78	37.23	35.28
B	Non Food	61.22	62.77	64.72
i	<i>Agro-Inputs</i>	6.46	3.14	8.25
ii	<i>Repair and construction of house</i>	3.51	3.25	5.28
iii	<i>Education of children</i>	3.46	2.26	8.54
iv	<i>Health</i>	5.28	3.16	4.55
v	<i>Dress and Ornaments</i>	6.56	7.51	11.03
vi	<i>Animal Husbandry</i>	0.53	0.16	2.12
vii	<i>Fuel/lighting</i>	2.24	3.47	1.48
viii	<i>Alcohol/country liquor</i>	6.44	10.48	0.17
ix	<i>Bidi/Cigarette/Gutka/Tabacco</i>	3.52	3.23	1.26
x	<i>Traveling</i>	2.98	1.87	3.49
xi	<i>Entertainment</i>	1.26	0.47	1.26
xii	<i>Social ceremonies (Marriage/Death/Festivals/Others)</i>	13.04	16.25	10.93
xiii	<i>Gift</i>	1.24	2.17	1.06
xiv	<i>Hospitality</i>	2.47	2.23	0.35
xv	<i>Repayment of Loan</i>	1.56	2.58	3.16
xvi	<i>Land revenue</i>	0.05	0.02	0.39
xvii	<i>Litigation</i>	0.04	0.24	0.53
xviii	<i>Backhand (Bribe)</i>	0.22	0.02	0.43
xix	<i>Others</i>	0.36	0.26	0.44
	Total	100	100	100

Source: Field Survey

Expenditure on Non food items is very from 61% to 65% among all selected PTGs. Out of total expenditure, the annual expenditure on non food items was 61.22 percent for kutia kandh, 62.77 percent for Dongria Kandha and 64.72 percent for Lanjia Saora (Table 4). One of the major expenditures seen is in Social ceremonies (Marriage/Death/Festivals/Others). It was 13.04 percent for kutia kandh, 16.25 percent for Dongria Kandha and 10.93 percent for Lanjia Saora. The other important items of expenditure were *Dress and Ornaments* and intoxicants (tobacco and alcohol).

Educational Attainment Index is very low among the tribals. The average tribal family spends a small portion of the total expenditure on education. As we found from the sample universe, an average of 3.46% of the total expenditure is spent for education for kutia kandha, 2.26% for Dongria Kandha and 8.54% for Lanjia Saora .

Another component of the total expenditure was the 5% expenditure of their total expenditure on medicine and other health related problems. Tribes generally prefer to go to the traditional healers for the treatment. It was even some decades ago, that the local *medicine men* (village medicine man)

had taken care of the physiological problems by means of traditional system of medicine, which radically disappeared because of the active presence of modern form of allopathic medicine and Medicare. Although the rugged topographical features retard the adequate growth of infrastructural facilities in the study area, the people of remote villages still prefer to go to the health centres of modern medicine. Thus, expenditure on medicine has risen considerably in the study area.

CONCLUSION

Even after sixty years of independence and in spite of initiation of dozens of welfare schemes in the post-independence era, the living condition of Schedule Tribes in Odisha has not improved to an appreciable level. A very low level of literacy accompanied by widespread poverty and poor infrastructure has hampered their economic upliftment. Income and expenditure pattern of the tribals gives a dismal picture regarding the standard of living of the tribals. Therefore, priority should be given to the field of education, income generating activities and off farm activities for the empowerment of the tribals. To sum up, there is urgent need to strengthen the institutional capacity of government agencies, Panchayati Raj Institutions, NGOs and civil society to work effectively on a participatory mode for poverty reduction with tribal communities.

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