

A Study on
Socio–Economic Conditions of “Nomadic Tribes” (NTs) and “De-Notified Tribes” (DNTs)
in
Brahamagiri, Pipili and Puri Sadar Blocks of Puri District, Odisha



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By

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Preface

Social exclusion and marginalisation are a process wherein the material history of society reveals that resources get concentrated in the hands of a few, and a large section of society are made to depend on the whims and caprices of the resource holders/owners. Many lose the basic needs for survival to a select few. The poorest are not only relegated to the fringes, but are also alienated from the society as lesser humans.

Social exclusion is the process in which individuals are blocked from various legitimate rights and opportunities. The resources that are normally available to members of different ethnic groups in a democratic society, like ours, are decimated. Social exclusion creates obstacles for individuals or communities from participating fully in the economic, social, and political life of the society in which they live.

There are many studies on communities suffering from social exclusion and inclusive strategies adopted by democratic socialistic republics, but most are in vain. The socially disadvantaged groups often come across as a liability and are mitigated with as a “negative impact”. Often the disadvantaged section is disposed of in the process of “development” leaving a question on “development for whom”. Like many, the NT/DNT communities of Odisha are a disadvantaged section.

Acknowledgements

This report presents findings and analyses from a research study commissioned by ECO-NET to identify the major social and economic problems experienced by Nomadic Tribes (NTs) and De-notified Tribes (DNTs) in Puri district of Odisha. The objective of this study was to develop a deep insight into the socio-economic problems, livelihood choices of these communities, appraise the effectiveness of various government schemes and interventions meant to improve their status of living. We hope this present study will be able to bridge this gap and will provide an insight into the problems faced by these social groups and help government evolve new strategies to bring about a positive and sustainable change in their lives.

It gives me much pleasure to acknowledge my deep sense of gratitude and indebtedness to Ms. Gauri Bhopatkar of ECO-NET and team based at Pune for conceptualizing the study. We would like to express my gratitude to all who have contributed to the successful completion of this study.

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I hope that the findings and recommendations will add value to the work of the government and development organizations working with Nomadic Tribes and De-notified Tribes in the country for their welfare and social uplift.

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ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS

CTA	Criminal Tribes Act
DNT	De-Notified Tribe
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HSC	High School Certificate
IAY	Indira Awas Yojna
KII	Key Informant Interview
MDM	Mid Day Meal
NT	Nomadic Tribe
OGLS Act	Odisha Government Land Settlement Act
PDS	Public Distribution System
PMAY	Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna (PMAY)
PR	Panchayati Raj
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institution
RoR	Record of Right
SC	Schedule Caste
SCSTRTI	Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute
ST	Schedule Tribe
VASUNDHARA	A housing scheme of Odisha government

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Executive Summary

This study aimed to identify the major social and economic problems experienced Nomadic Tribes (NTs) and De-notified Tribes (DNTs) in Odisha. The scope of the study was quite limited to understand the major features of their current status so that subsequent study and recommendations can be made. The study was conducted in year 2021 and looked into impacts of Covid pandemic on them.

The study covered four types of NT/DNTs living in nine villages. Primary household level data was collected from 110 households, FGDs were held in all nine sample villages and Key Informant Interviews were conducted with Panchayati raj members and government officials at district and block levels. The study also interacted to resource agencies such as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute (SCSTRTI).

The major findings of the research are that NT/DNT communities lack adequate access to land, housing, water and sanitation, along with livelihood options. The study also found that economic condition is absolutely dismal and they are being socially and politically discriminated. Most households do not even have any homestead land and live in an inhuman environment. Many households have been denied caste certificate simply because they do not have any land records.

The study found that Covid 19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown had significantly impacted their livelihoods and food security. Many cases of serious distress came up during the study.

The report concludes with immediate and medium-term action points on access to homestead land, housing, livelihoods, political participation and social mainstreaming. Their vulnerability to disasters is profoundly higher than others. Hence, reducing their vulnerabilities to disaster risks have to be an integrated and mainstreamed component. One of the most important and immediate need is to undertake a comprehensive study should be undertaken on the socio-economic condition of the NTs and DNTs in Odisha. Accordingly, government should ensure to enumerate them in statistical surveys as NTs and DNTs in the state of Odisha. Government of Odisha should prepare lists of the de-notified or nomadic communities, as a result of which basic demographic information required to support any targeted initiatives shall be available even at the State level.

The key recommendations are as follows:

- Regarding the population, the government must enumerate the NTs and DNTs.
- Regarding land, the government should ensure land rights as per the Odisha Prevention of Land Encroachment Act 1972; Odisha Government Land Settlement (OGLS) Act, 1962; and related government scheme like “VASUNDHARA” in a way that is transparent, timely, monitored for adequate living standards and facilities.
- Regarding housing, State and Central governments should prioritise housing allocation for NTs and DNTs in both urban and rural areas under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna

(PMAY) and the Biju Pucca Ghar Yojana scheme, and housing should be culturally sensitive.

- Government should support both traditional livelihoods through access to markets for handicrafts and produce, and further skill development; and also facilitate alternative livelihoods and skills development for those unable to make a living through traditional skills.
- Government should engage in outreach to ensure NTs and DNTs are counted in statistical surveys and are registered to access the full range of welfare provisions they are entitled to under various laws and policies. The government should also consider establishing targeted welfare schemes for these two groups.
- To ensure adequate levels of education, the Odisha government should open new Schools in NT and DNT dominated districts, and establish a scholarship scheme for NT and DNT children. In some cases, such schools should be mobile to accommodate nomadic and semi-nomadic lifestyles.
- Government should take action to increase participation of NT and DNT peoples, especially women, in the *Palli Sabha* and *Gram Sabha*. Training should be implemented to increase their awareness of their rights under law, and their capacity to claim those rights should be ensured via the provision of legal aid at the block and other levels.
- Government should educate its officials, civil society and the general public regarding the lives and rights of NTs and DNTs.
- Covid 19 pandemic has seriously affected their livelihoods. Special programmes need to be undertaken for their improved and sustained livelihoods and living standard.
- The community members were found to be seriously vulnerable to natural disasters. Their poor housing, living condition, lack of any land or records, and unique livelihoods make them susceptible to disasters and also limits their scopes to access government and other disaster relief and reconstruction support.

1. INTRODUCTION

This study is an attempt to map the socio-economic conditions of the *Kela* communities, a ‘Nomadic Tribe’ (NT) residing in four blocks of Puri district in Odisha, i.e., Brahamagiri, Satyavadi, Pipili and Puri Sadar Blocks. The District Gazetteer of Puri reflects that “The *Kelas* are a low caste of fowlers, jugglers and beggars. Originally, these nomadic people were believed to have come from South India”. *Kelas* are a group of wanderers who were living either by begging or by entertaining others or we can say that that was their identity. The term *Kela* applies in a generic way to a number of caste groups speaking different languages and professing different religion. These caste groups are popularly designated as *Kela* community, which do not constitute a well-defined ethnic group or a particular occupational group¹. They are a gypsy like ethnic groups of nomadic habit divided into five sub-castes, viz *Nalua or Patrasuras, Sapua, Matia, Gandia* and *Sabakhias*.

Among these, this study focuses on the socio-economic aspects of *Matias, Mundapota* and *Sabakhia Kela* of Brahamagiri, Puri Sadar and Pipili blocks of Puri districts. *Matias* are earth diggers and a South-Indian tribe found in Puri district. The other categories like *Mundapota Kela* and *Sabakhia Kela* live in rural areas at a subsistence livestock economy. *Mundapota Kela* bury their heads under the earth and beg alms from the public. *Sabakhia Kela* are professional beggars. They take anything, even the dead snakes, as their diet. That’s why they are known *Sabakhias* or eaters of dead. The people are mostly related to each other through their shared history. *Kela* women also sell or barter cheap cosmetics, toys, ornaments and stationery items to the rural folks and side by side beg for food, alms and clothes while their male members stage their shows². They are regarded as NTs- Nomadic Tribes and De-Notified Tribes (DNTs) as per the lists prepared by Renke Commission constituted by Government of India.

It has been estimated that South Asia has the world’s largest nomadic population. In India, roughly 10 per cent of the population is De-notified and/or Nomadic. The number of De-notified Tribes is about 150 different communities. The projected population of Nomadic Tribes together with the Semi-nomadic communities is roughly 7% of the national population; and consists of 500 different communities of mobile herders, foragers and peripatetic communities (as per Randhava 1996, Malhotra 1982). While the De-notified Tribes have almost settled in various States of the country, the Nomadic Communities continue to be largely nomadic in pursuit of their traditional professions³.

The Indian Constitution has no mention of ‘Notified’, ‘De-notified or ‘Nomadic Tribes’. It confines itself to the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and the Backward Classes. One of

1. M. Suba Rao , Denotified and Nomadic Tribes (DNTs) in Odisha,
https://www.academia.edu/35468453/Denotified_and_Nomadic_Tribes_DNTs_in_Orissa

2. S.C. Mohanty, *SapuaKela: The Nomadic Snake Charmers*

3. Scheme for Economic Empowerment Of De-notified/Nomadic Tribes (Seed), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of India , 2022 [NCDNT2008-v1 \(1\).pdf \(socialjustice.nic.in\)](#)

the key problems in placing these communities on India's developmental map is the non-availability of authentic and relevant data, as no Caste-wise Census was undertaken between 1931 and 2011. Moreover, as most of these communities are nomadic, they are unlikely to be enumerated in the Census data collection process⁴. Further, a number of States have not prepared lists of either the de-notified or nomadic communities, as a result of which basic demographic information required to support any targeted initiatives is unavailable even at the State level. The difficulty in drawing up a detailed official record of these communities has rendered them invisible in the development process even though they are present in almost all States.

These communities had specific occupations by which they were identified. But, the identities with which they were identified in earlier times has undergone some change with time, and more so in recent decades. Currently, non-agriculture labour, petty business, hawkers, street vendors etc. are their primary occupation. A few live on begging for food and money from others.

The De-notified and Nomadic Tribes have thus been largely out of focus of the social sector management except in a couple of States like Maharashtra and Gujarat. It has also been painfully observed that even though a large number of these Communities are in the lists of SCs, STs and BCs/OBCs, they have not been able to take advantage of the affirmative action programmes launched by the Union and the States from time to time due to illiteracy and ignorance. As a result, these Communities continue to be the most disadvantaged and the most vulnerable section of the Indian society⁵.

The prevailing social and economic impoverishment of the nomadic communities must be understood within its historical framework. The process of socio-economic marginalization of NT & DNT began during the British rule. In 1871, India's British-Raj declared certain tribal, nomadic, semi-nomadic groups as 'Born Criminals' and passed the wicked 'Criminal Tribes Act, 1871 (CTA)'. As per the CTA, wandering groups were considered as hereditary criminals who are 'addicted to the systematic commission of non-bailable offences' (Mukul 2004). In essence, they were nomadic cattle grazers, wandering singers, fortune tellers, priest, seasonal traders, acrobats, entertainers, etc. In pursuit of their traditional occupations and activities, some lived in the forests and according to the British-raj only criminals would do so and therefore brought them under CTA, 1871. Some groups had to put up a resistance to British aggression against them from time to time. However, British-raj increased their might to include more and more such wandering groups, chiefly to control and contain their movements through a series of amendments to Criminal Tribes Acts (from 1871 to 1944) throughout the different geographical and administrative units of India. There were of course a few communities which had criminal records, but bringing all pastoral and nomadic communities into the fold of the CTA was a major flaw in the Act (D'Souza 2001). The majority of these groups were kept in British run and monitored camps for decades in the name of

4.Puri Chandrakant , Improving Access To Quality Education For The Nomadic Mendicant And Entertainer Tribes status, Opportunities And Challenges 2016, [NT-DNT_report_final.pdf \(negfire.org\)](https://negfire.org/NT-DNT_report_final.pdf)

5. ibid

Box1: Notified and De-Notified Tribe

Criminal Tribes Act, 1871 and notification of tribes as criminal: *The British government brought a law in the name 'Criminal Tribes Act in 1887 (CTA, 1871)'. The law declared certain tribal, nomadic, semi-nomadic groups as 'Born Criminals'. Section 5 of that Act allowed the Governor General that if it is satisfied with local government's report that the tribe, gang or class to which it relates ought to be declared criminal, and that the means by which it is proposed that such tribe, gang or class shall earn its living are adequate, he may authorize the local government to publish in the local Gazette a notification declaring that such tribe, gang or class is a criminal tribe.*

'Habitual Offender's Act, 1952' and denotification of the Tribes as Criminal Tribe

In 1952, the Government of India officially 'de-notified' the earlier 'notified' tribes from the CTA, 1871. But, it was largely cosmetic in nature as it was limited to renaming of the CTA, 1871 as 'Habitual Offender's Act, 1952'. The new Act was not very different from the 'Criminal Tribes Act, 1871'.

reforming and emancipating them from their criminal behaviour. This has negatively impacted their behaviour and has been haunting them even after the British left India. But in actuality, they were brainwashed and tortured to accept that they are born criminals.

In 1952, the Government of India officially 'de-notified' them from CTA but renamed the old Act with the new name 'Habitual Offender's Act, 1952' and passed without much changes to it. The new Act is not very different from the 'Criminal Tribes Act, 1871'. Further, this amended Act in the post-independent India made no provisions for their livelihood. De-notified tribes have continued to face historical dislocation, dishonour, social neglect, discrimination as ex-criminals and dacoits. The question many scholars posed was as to how a community could be considered and treated as criminals by birth. They noted that there may be a few individuals who commit unlawful acts, but the community as a whole cannot be born as criminals. This is nothing but an absurd idea which advocates a clear agenda to isolate, contain a large number of nomadic communities and exterminate some of the small princely groups from power, sovereignty, freedom, etc. (Susan 1999). It was also argued in the literature that these groups were working as informants to the freedom fighters, providing them with food, money, and ammunition and fighting along with them in the freedom struggle. Some groups who had princely background with small kingdoms were thrown out of power and listed them in CTA, 1871 so as to deprive them of ruling powers and lose their identity forever (Dandekar 2009, Yang 1985). Meanwhile, many nomadic trading communities have gradually lost their livelihood with the advent of railways and roads and outsiders entering into their domain activities. Other groups were gradually alienated from land holdings by local dominant communities and forced to live in poor conditions. This continued even after their de-notification from CTA. Consequently, they remained backward in almost all the indicators of human development index. Today, countless de-notified tribes survive

on begging for food and money from others. Some others eke out living on collecting and selling rags, performing street acrobats, as wandering priests, entertainers, etc. They possess no/little land, lack proper housing, no fixed assets and therefore wander from one place to another in search of means of survival. Urban ghettos, isolated open arena and dilapidated areas are their usual habitats. Living in such areas with a minimum or absence of basic facilities they eventually contract multiple diseases and the whole family suffers from such an outcome. In such precarious situations, children do not usually go to school and instead go for begging for food to feed their family (Radhakrishna 2001). They are isolated and excluded from mainstream development processes. Human rights violations against them are common and frequent and the reality with which they are living today. They every now and then face differential treatment leading to gradual social exclusion from the mainstream society. As a result, they lost self-respect, confidence and become voiceless, which is further pushing them in a vicious circle of chronic poverty. 6

Moreover, it can be observed that even in Indian Police Service syllabus studies, the de-notified and nomadic tribes have been presented with a criminal persona. This attitude and its repercussions are visible in atrocities carried out on these tribes across the country⁷.

Ironically the moment India adopted its Constitution, it was considered that all its citizens were equal, but the treatment by the society and the governing system to these tribes definitely brings out a different of story. The plight of *Kelas*, and many other communities, have gone unnoticed; even the mainstream media needs to be sensitized about the ground realities and this aspect of foundation of modern India.

DNTs / NTs are found in different parts of Odisha. They belong mostly to SC and ST categories. DNTs/NTs are among the underprivileged and destitute communities today.

After independence, the Government of India had set up a committee under Ananthasayanam Ayyangar in 1949-50. The people who were notified as Criminal Tribes during British rule and were de-notified after independence in 1952, and since have been known as De-Notified Tribes, based on the Ayyangar report.

According to the Idate Commission report, the population of the de-notified, nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes (DNT/NT/SNT) would be around 15 crores. The Commission had observed, most de-notified and nomadic tribes are impoverished and hence are unaware of their rights and entitlements.

In Odisha, as per the list prepared by the Chairman, National Commission for De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment Government

6. [Working Paper 139 Vijay Korra Sep. 2017.p65 \(cess.ac.in\)](#)

7. [Madhukar Sanap, \(PDF\) Contemporary Issues of Nomadic and Denotified Tribes in Maharashtra \(Analytical Review | Madhukar Sanap - Academia.edu\)](#)

of India), Bala Krishna Renke, on the 30th June, 2008; there are peripatetic and forest nomads and presence of Pastoral Nomads is almost nil in the state.

Table 1 lists the names of tribes that were de-notified (DNTs) in Odisha.

Table 1: De-notified tribes of Odisha in the list of National Commission for De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes	
Major Group	Different names of the major tribe in the Commission's list
Mundapota	Mundapota, Munda Potta
Ghasi	Ghasis, Ghasi, Ghasia
Pana	Jaintia Pana, Jaintra Pans, Jaintira Pano
Paidi	Pydis, Paidi
Lodha	Lodhas, Lodha
Dandasi Pano	Dandasi Pano
Pamula	Telenga Pamula, Telaga, Pamula
Minka	Minkas, Minka
Domb	Oriya Domb, Dombo, Anduria, Domb/Adhuria, Domb
Ganda	Gandas, Ganda

The tribes that were notified as 'Criminal Tribes' under Criminal Tribes Act, 1871 and later De-notified after enactment of Habitual Offender's Act, 1952. The above such De-notified tribes live in various parts of Odisha. From the above list the '*Muntapota*' and '*Mundapotta*' groups are popularly referred to as *Kela* in mainstream societies.

While Table 1 lists the De-notified tribes living in Odisha, table 2 is the list of tribes recognised as 'Nomadic Tribes'. This list has names of

'Ghusuria' and 'Kela'. These groups are normally considered as *Kela* by the mainstream societies.

Table 2: Name of 'Nomadic Tribes/Groups' in the list of National Commission for De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes	
SI No	Names of the tribe/group
1	Mankidi
2	Mankadria
3	Birhor
4	Bajikar
5	Ghantara, Ghada, Ghantara
6	Sabakhia
7	Ghusuria
8	Kela
9	Madari

Many studies have found that these groups are among the least developed groups/tribes in India. Their nomadic status, past recognition as 'criminal tribe' makes them more vulnerable. Their general conditions of living continue to be pathetic and pitiable. They are victims of socio-cultural stigma, social neglect and exploitation for centuries. Their literacy rate is very low. Most of them

do not have access to health care facilities. They suffer from a number of atrocities not only by people of other communities but within their own families. They complain about not getting caste certificates, not having ration cards, old age pension and other social security entitlements etc. Women are particularly prone to more discrimination and sufferings. As a child, girls are often treated differently from male children in terms of nutrition and health care; where limited food or financial resources are available, the insufficient means are prone to be allocated unevenly in favour of the male offspring. Many women are inclined to experience domestic violence, deprivation of food, and lack of access to information, healthcare, and education. Thus, the vicious cycle of illiteracy and abuse is likely to be continued and passed on to their own daughters.

Because of extreme poverty, they depend on money-lenders, which impoverish them even further. Almost all families of *Kela* communities are very poor, and live with just hand to mouth earnings. Even survival is a constant struggle for them with their daily earnings being very low and hardly enough to sustain the entire family.

There are many reports of varied forms exclusion of the Notified Tribes (NTs) and De-Notified Tribes (DNTs), including Administrative, Political, Economic and Social exclusion.

Kela, is a commonly used term for tribes or groups having totally varied background, culture, livelihoods, language. Even government have categorised them differently, some as Schedule Caste (SC), some as Schedule Tribes (ST) and some have not been recognised either as SC or ST. The only aspect that probably is common is that all the groups were nomadic at one point of time, their ancestors are mostly South India, and they all live acute marginalised lives. Interestingly some communities which are popularly referred to and/or called as *Kela* object to such reference and claim that they are not *Kela*.

This study has aimed to peep into the communities who are locally or popularly referred to as *Kela* and has attempted to look at their current status by tracing the communities in eight villages of Puri district in Odisha. The purpose to understand their current situation from social, economic and political angles for further actions, including actions for welfare of these communities and further studies to proper policy actions. The study was carried out in the first half of year 2022, after easing of Covid-19 pandemic.

2. THE STUDY – OBJECTIVE, METHODOLOGY

One of the major problems faced by policy makers and development practitioners has been the lack of relevant data and information about various socio-economic issues concerning De-notified and nomadic communities. Some groups have been recognised as Schedule Tribe (ST), some other groups have been recognised as Schedule Caste (SC), while there are some groups who have not been considered either as STs or SCs. Though the De-notified and Nomadic tribes/groups have been on the margins for centuries, not many research or studies have been conducted on their situation, issues, problems etc, which make the task of policy makers and development practitioners difficult for developing adequate welfare policies and schemes for them.

There is an acute lack of information about the socio-economic conditions and status of De-notified and nomadic communities. This study has attempted to shed some light on the life, livelihoods and general status of the De-notified and nomadic communities and articulate these concerns within the paradigm of fundamental human rights.

2.1: Objectives of the study

The following are the objectives of the study:

- To identify and understand the forms and nature of exclusion of the De-notified and nomadic communities in Puri district of Odisha.
- To identify their sources of livelihood, employment opportunities, education and health access and participation in social and political institutions.
- To develop base material for further public awareness on issues of NT/DNTs.
- To make recommendations for evolving an appropriate policy for improving the quality of life of the De-notified and Nomadic communities.

This study was designed to generate a body of knowledge on socio-economic aspects of De-notified Tribe (DNT) and Nomadic Tribe (NT) in Puri district of Odisha. The NTs and DNTs do not live in all villages. They are found in few villages and small habitations. The tools were identified to capture both primary household level information as well as village level data related to the NTs and DNTs.

2.2 Study tools

The NT and DNT communities in Puri district of Odisha have been selected as per the lists prepared by 'Renke Commission'. The study found out four groups of NTs and DNTs in Puri district. They are (i) *Mundapota Kela*, (ii) *Ghusuria*, (iii) *Sabakhia Kela*, and (iv) *Matia*. They reside in eight villages of Brahmanagiri, Puri Sadar and Pipili block in Puri district of Odisha.

The study relied on primary data collection through (a) household level interview schedule, (b) Focussed Group Discussion, (c) Key Informant interviews, and (d) Observation Schedule. The study has supplemented the primary data with secondary data of government and other sources, particularly census and similar data. However, the study was constrained by extremely limited secondary data on NTs and DNTs in Odisha.

A draft interview schedule tool was first prepared and subjected to field testing. That was the primary information collection tool of the study as that provided some basic household level data. Household level data were collected from all NT and DNT households residing in the nine villages

A check list facilitated Focussed Group Discussions (FGDs). However, deliberate attempts were made to not make the FGDs too formal an exercise. The FGDs were largely informal in nature as such an approach helped in generating openness from the community members. The observation schedule particularly aimed at observing their status vis-à-vis other communities and their general living condition, with particular focus on exclusion and discrimination, living standard etc.



Photo: Discussion in Khjilakantia village

of the NT and DNT communities.

The Key Informants include Panchayat Members and officials of Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribe department in the Government of Odisha.

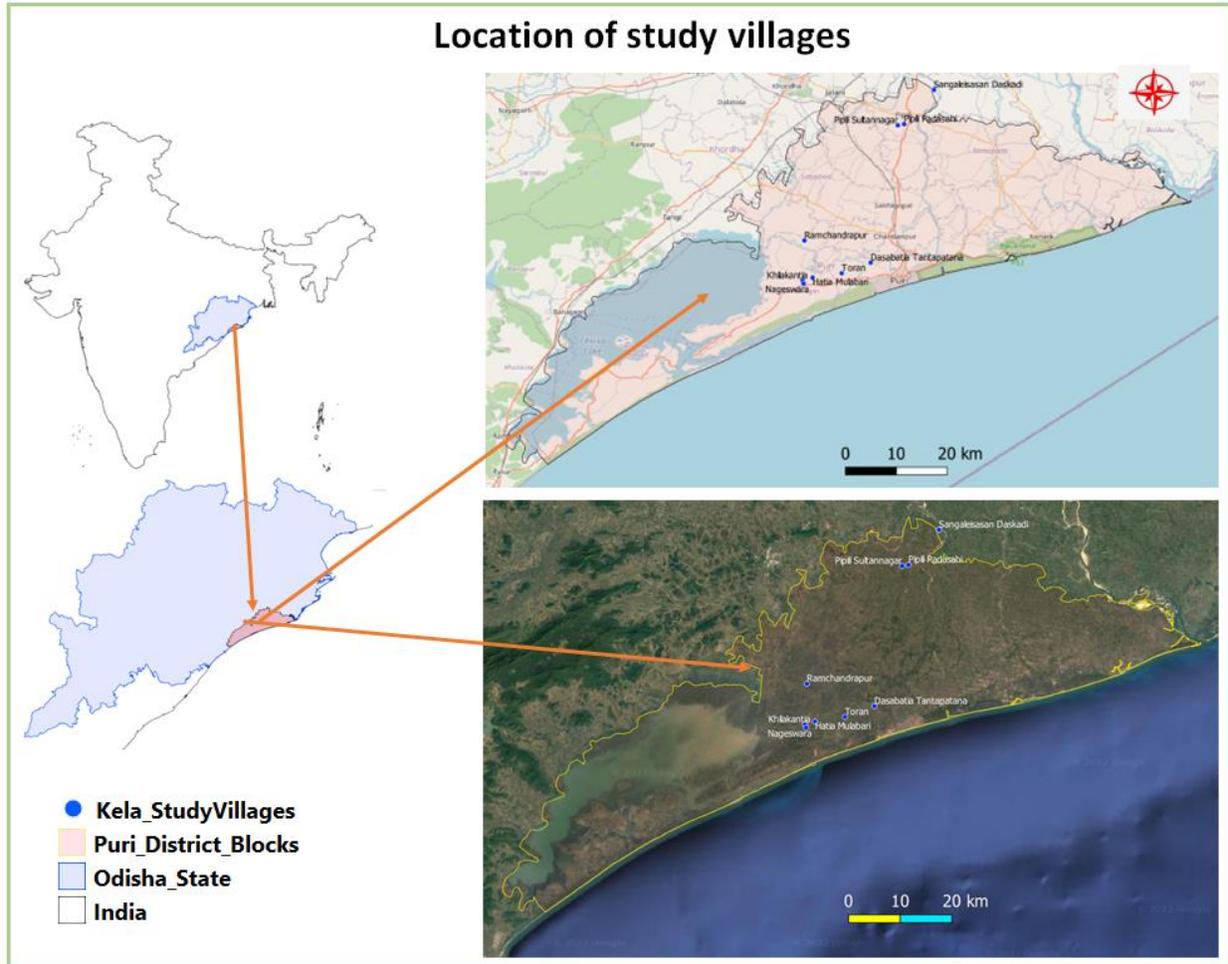
The tools also attempted to understand if the Covid-19 made impacts on their life and livelihoods and if yes, in what way.

A few case studies have been given to illustrate the conditions

2.3 Location of the Study

The target communities of the study were traced in nine villages of Puri district in Odisha - five villages of Brahamagiri block, three villages of Pipili block, and one village of Puri Sadar block. Figure 1 locates the study villages.

Figure 1: Location of study villages



The study collected data from all 110 NT and DNT households residing in the 9 sample villages of Puri district. Two of the villages lie within Pipili Notified Area Council limits. Out of the 110 households, 36 households were from the *Mundapota* community of Brahamagiri and Pipili block, 32 households from *Sabakhiakela* community of Brahamagiri and Puri Sadar block, 17 household from *Ghusuria* community, and 25 households from *Mati* community in Pipili block of Puri district. Chart 1 indicates composition of different types of tribes/groups in the sample.

Chart 1: Composition of NTs & DNTs in the study sample

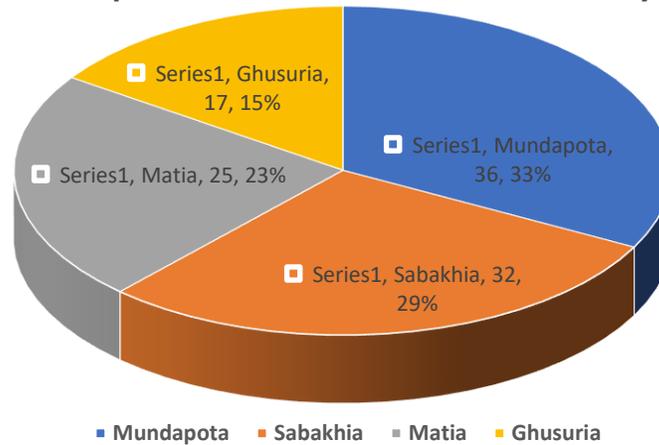


Table 3 provides number of NT and DNT households in different sample villages. All these 110 households were sample of the study. They have been living in the midst of settled communities since to four to five generations now.

Table 3 NTs and DNTs households in Study villages					
Sl No	Village	Panchayat	Block	Type of NT/DNT	Total HH
1	Nageswar	Niajpur	Brahamagiri	MundapotaKela	14
2	Ramchandrapur	Dimirisena	Brahamagiri	SabakhiaKela	2
3	Hatia Mulabari	RebanaNuagoan	Brahamagiri	SabakhiaKela	7
4	KhilaKantia	Niajpur	Brahamagiri	SabakhiaKela	10
5.	Toran	Ampada	Brahamagiri	SabakhiaKela	12
6	Dasabatia Tantapatna	SasanDamodarpur	Puri Sadar	Ghusuria	17
7	Pipili Padasahi	Pipili NAC	Pipili	MundapotaKela	11
8.	Pipili Sultan Nagar	Pipili NAC	Pipili	MundapotaKela	12
9	Sangalaisasan Dasakadi	SangalaiSasan	Pipili	Matia	25
Total NT/DNT sample households (in 9 villages 7 Panchayats and 1 Notified Area Council)					110

The primary data were collected in the last quarter of 2021 to first quarter of year 2022, after relaxation of Covid-19 pandemic restrictions. The chief researcher engaged a team of trained investigators to collect primary data from the household level and ensure their verification. Researcher himself conducted all FGDs and KIIs.

3. MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

3.1. Recognition of the sample NTs and DNTs as ST/SC

The exact number of the NTs and DNTs population is not available because a formal census has never been conducted of these NTs and DNTs communities. The tribe/groups who are referred to as *Kela* by the mainstream societies are not one single homogenic group. The government has recognised them differently. Among the studied sample tribes/groups, the *Sabakhia*, *Ghushuria*, *Mundapota* tribes have been categorised as Schedule Caste. They have not been considered as a Tribe. Table 4 lists the groups and their SC/ST status. The *Matia* group has been recognised as Schedule Tribe.

Table 4: NTs and DNTs of study area and their recognition as SC and ST

SI No	NT/DNT group	Recognition status
1	Sabakhia	Schedule Caste
2	Ghushuria	Schedule Caste
3	Mundapota	Schedule Caste
4	Matia	Schedule Tribe

The study found an interesting and glaring omission. While the *Ghusuria* community households have been treated as ‘Schedule Caste’, some households of the same group residing in Torana village are not getting SC certificate from government as somehow land records of some households have recorded their caste as ‘Shukara’. Government officials are treating ‘Shukara’ and ‘Ghusuria’ differently while they are all

practicality one group. While registration, some land documents have somehow recorded their caste name as ‘Shukara’ and that is denying those households SC certificate.

3.2 Habitations and Household size

In all the nine villages where the study located NTs and DNTs, it was clearly evident that though the NT and DNTs are staying there since more than three generations, they live a secluded life and away from the main habitations of the villages. Their habitations are located at distance from the main habitations of the villages. The habitations are identified by the name in which the NTs and DNTs are referred to by the mainstream communities.

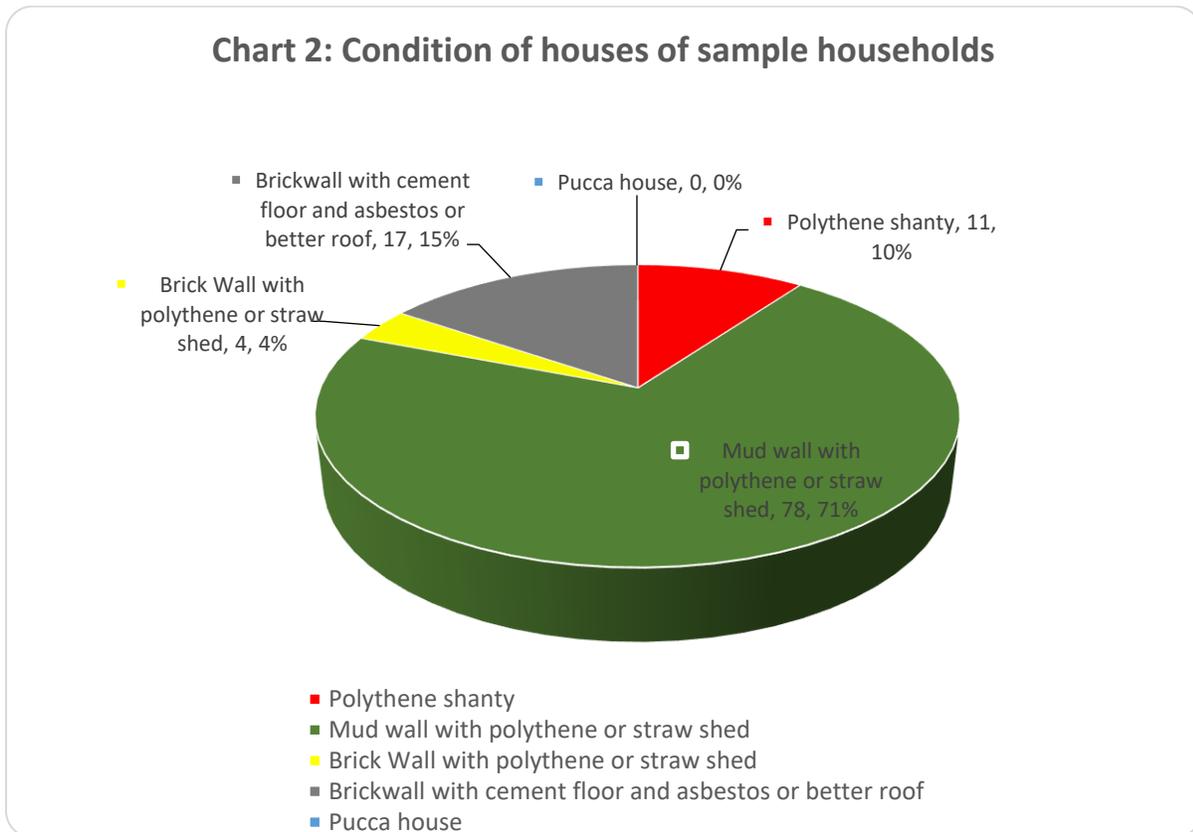
The NTs and DNTs are mostly living as nuclear families. The average family size is 5.3.

All households were found to be in below poverty line category. Most of the households don't own any noteworthy assets, except bicycles, a few mobile phones & television sets. The

community also lack the adequate access to basic amenities such as water, grazing land, roads and other facilities.

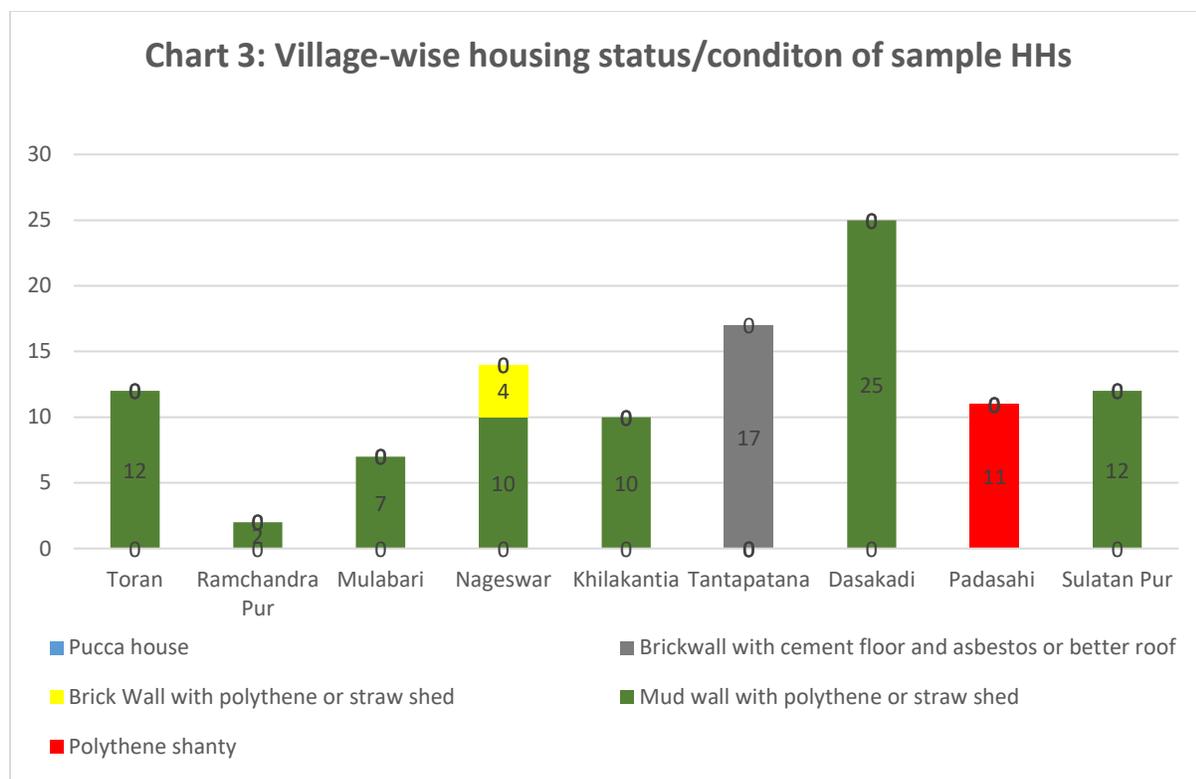
3.3 Dwelling status

The NTs and DNT households residing in sample villages were found to be living in abysmal condition. Status of their dwellings give a sordid tale of their living condition. Chart 2 indicates composition of the households by type of their dwelling houses.



None of the 110 households had a Pucca house. As high as 10% of households are living in plastic covered shanties while 70.9% of households had their dwelling made of mud wall with polythene or straw shed over the houses. Only 15.5% of households had brick-walled houses with cement floor and a better roof.

Though none of the NT and DNT household had a Pucca house, yet the study found some marked distinction in type of houses in different villages. Figure 4 captures village-wise status of houses of NT and DNT communities.



As can be found out from Chart 3, households living in Tantapatana village had relatively lot better houses while all households in Padashi habitation of Pipili NAC were living in plastic covered shanties. Table 5 captures the same data reflected in Chart 3.

Village	Polythene shanty	Mud wall with polythene or straw shed	Brick Wall with polythene or straw shed	Brickwall with cement floor and asbestos or better roof	Pucca house
Toral	0	12	0	0	0
Ramachandrapur	0	2	0	0	0
Hatia Mulabari	0	7	0	0	0
Nageswar	0	10	4	0	0
Khilakantia	0	10	0	0	0
Tantapatana	0	0	0	17	0
Dasakadi	0	21	0	0	0
Padasahi	11	0	0	0	0
Sultan Nagar	0	12	0	0	0
Total	11	78	4	17	0

Case study 1: They have a house – if we call that a house

In Sultan Nagar of Pipili block, the government has provided tiny 8 feet into 8 ft houses built with stone around 20 years back for a few *Mundapota Kela* families. Their RoR has not yet been recognised. Those families have extended to multiple families now. Yet, they somehow manage in that tiny shelter space which they call as their house.



(Photo: A house in Sultan Nagar village)

Case study 2: Polythene covered shanty is their home



On the left is Lata Shikari, in front of her house. She belongs to *Mundapota Kela* community and lives in Pada Sahi of Pippli NAC area. The tiny polythene covered shanty is home of the old lady. Lata says, ‘they are considered to be illegal or unauthorized encroachers by other communities and government agencies. Our families remain under the constant fear of being displaced. Political leaders and parties invite us to part of political rallies but our request for a piece of homestead land and a house have not been considered.’



Similar to Lata Shikari is the status of Sagar Shikari and his family (in photo on the left). Sagar is a young boy growing up inside the tiny polythene shanty. While boys of his age from other communities have decent houses, Sagar and their family of five members has only this one.

3.4 Status of homestead land

While their poor living condition is clearly evident with the type of their houses, the vulnerabilities of the NTs and DNTs become even more pronounced from legal status of their dwelling and size of dwelling units. Some lucky households have valid title over their homestead lands, while a few are having their meagre dwelling over land that they have purchased. Most other households have built their dwellings over government land and in one case over private land of other people.

Chart 4 indicates status of rights over the land on which the households currently have their dwelling. 66% of the households do not have any title over the land on which they currently reside while 34% have some kind of recognition. Out of the 37 households that have some forms of title over the homestead land, 14 households have got such land by some programme or scheme of government whereas 23 households have their house over land that they or their ancestors have purchased.

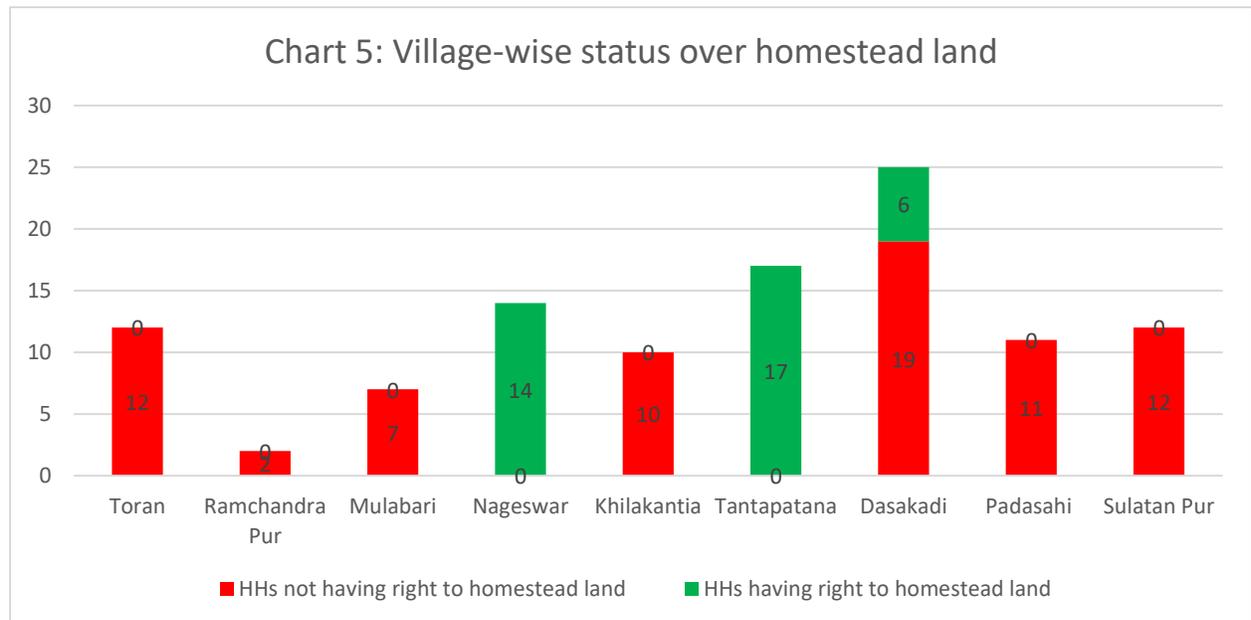
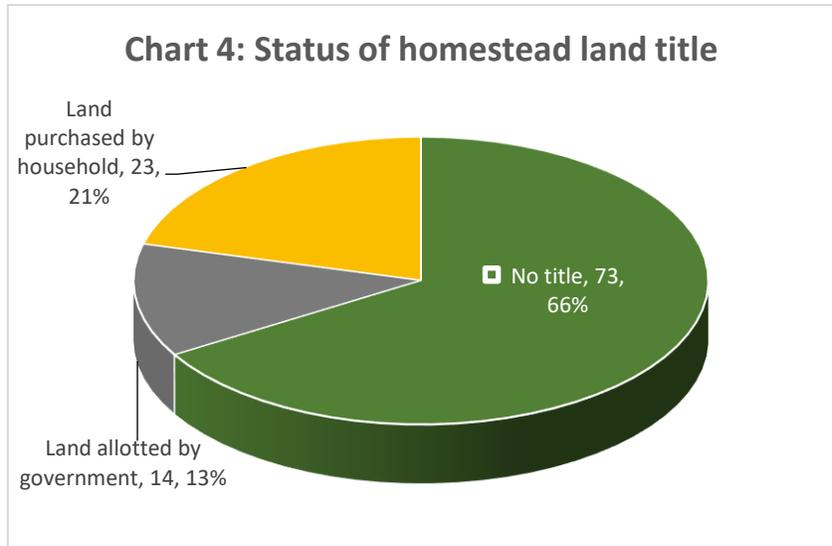


Chart 5 indicates village-wise status of right over homestead land. Out of nine villages/hamlets, in only two villages all NT/DNT residents have got some forms of title over land while in another village some families have title. No NT DNT household in the other six villages have title over the land on which they have set up their dwelling. The *Mundapota Kela* families of Nageswar village, in Brahamagiri block, have Record of Rights (ROR) on the homestead land. The Government has provided them leased land under 'Vasundhara Yojana' in 2013. The ex-Sarapanch of the Panchayat has played an active role in allotment of land to this community. Four households have constructed houses under Indira Awas Yojana and Prime Minister Awas Yojana.

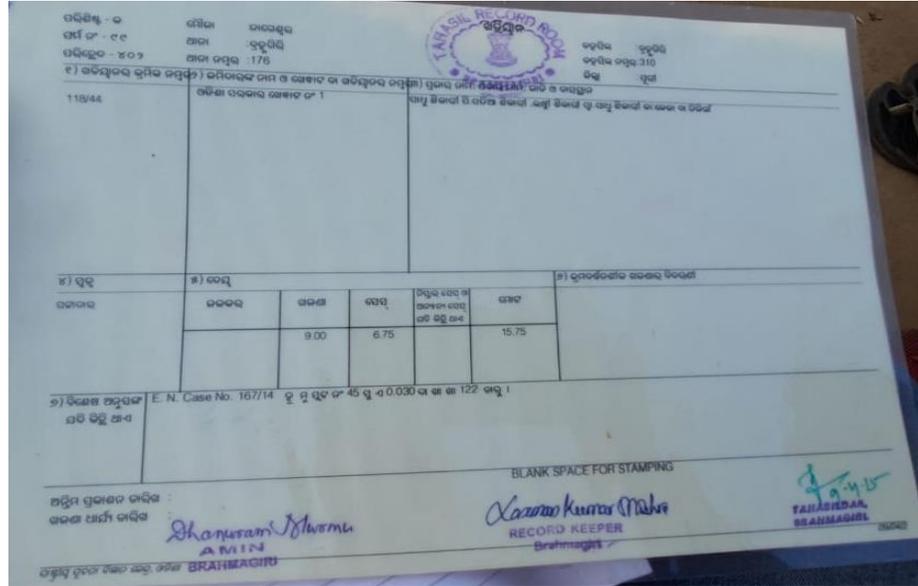


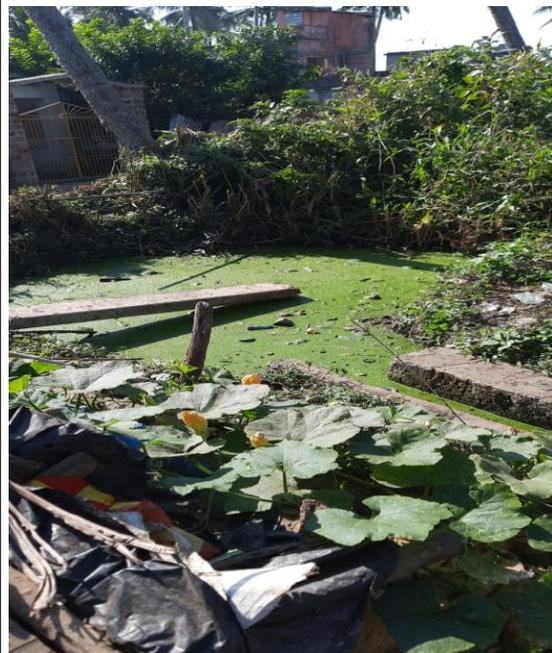
Figure 2: Copy of Record of Right over homestead land received by Mr. Sadhu Shikari of Nageswar village

Case study 3: Their ancestors had purchased 5 decimals land, now 17 households stay there

Father of Bira Guru and his two brothers somehow had managed to purchase 5 decimals of swampy land in Tantapatna village some 20 years ago. Now, 17 descendant households having about 80 members live in that meagre 5 decimal land.

They belong to *Ghusuria* group. Some of them had got government support under the earlier 'Indira Awas Yojna'. Drain water from nearby swamp make the surrounding a hell.

These households depend on one tube-well for their water needs. They maintain that tube-well.



Not many other households were even that lucky. They have been mostly occupying vacant land classified as pasture land, *gochar* (village grazing grounds) and “wastelands” in State registers. Tenure is precarious because they do not have title deeds to the lands they are currently occupying. The lack of legal status on these lands makes them vulnerable.

As most of the NT/DNT households have their dwellings over government and/or common lands, the sword of eviction always looms over them. Some of the households have been evicted or resettled a multiple of times.

Case study 4: Some had faint hopes, that too have died down

Some households were sanctioned support to build house under the then ‘Indira Awas Yojna’ and ‘Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna’ in Hatia Mulabari village of Brahamagiri block. But the sanction was later withdrawn citing lack of tenurial right over the land.

About one acre of land was donated to them by the villagers about two generations back. This is an isolated and swampy water-logged area. In the rainy season, the community faces extreme hardship to live there with submergence in rainy season.

The *Matias* of Sangualai Sasan village of Pipili block do not possess any agriculture land. Their forefathers were provided with 4 decimal of homestead land. They have land records in their names. As the size of the family grew, each family is staying in a tiny room with an approximate size of 80 to 100 sq ft. However, they don’t have surplus land for kitchen garden.

In fact, though the study area is limited to some villages of one district, Puri district, only; it found that the nature of access to homestead land varied significantly in the villages. Box 2 captures the diversity and acute vulnerability of the nature of access to the land on which the NTs and DNTs are residing now.

Box 2: Some observation of diverse nature of access to homestead land in sample villages

- Tantapatana village: Forefathers had bought 15 decimal land about three decades ago. A total of 17 households are now cramped inside that tiny piece of land.
- Sultan Nagar village: Government had provided readymade house to seven households about three decades ago. They hadn’t been provided with land title. The houses have crumbled since long. Families have grown a lot. Now, these households are staying at that same place with their own made small houses but don’t have title to the land.
- Toran village: Only two households have some agriculture land that they had bought about three years ago. But they do not have homestead land.
- Ramchandrapur village: Two families are staying at this place since about 10 years. They do not have rights yet to the land where they have their home.
- Hatia Mulabari village: Seven households are staying in the village since about 20 years now. But they have never been allowed to settle at one place in the village as villagers displace them often. They do not have any title to where they are staying.

- **Khilakantia village:** They are staying in the village since about 30 years now. Unlike Hatia Mulabari they have not been displaced by the villagers but they do not have right over the land where they are staying since the last 30 years.
- **Dasakadi village:** The community is staying in this village since six to seven generations now. Forefathers of the current generation had bought the land where they have their settlement now.
- **Padasahi village:** A private family had allowed the Kela households to reside in their private land. After 1999 super-cyclone their houses got destroyed. Since then, the Kela community is staying at the present location. They do not have title over the land where they are staying.
- **Nageswar village:** This is the only village that is an exception. All 14 households have right to homestead land. It was due to personal effort of the then Sarapanch 10 years ago. Out of those 14 households, Four households were covered under ‘Indira Awas House’ scheme. They are the only families among all sample households who have got land under government scheme.

The NT and DNT households also face another major problem. The coastal areas of Odisha is seriously prone to disasters, particularly cyclone and flood. In absence of clear title over the land on which they have their houses, they get excluded from damage reconstruction support. This came out as a major issue during the study. All the hamlets raised the concern that they were severely affected by cyclones *Phailin* and FANI but did not get any assistance from development agencies including government, except a few polythene packages and relief food during that time.

Case Study 5: Disasters too many

Ms. Mina Das, wife of Mr. Bhaja Das, Mulabari Sahi of Hatia village is an active and articulate woman of the *Kela* community. Her eyes became tearful when she shared her tryst with cyclone menace. When the government and panchayat authorities came here to evacuate them, she said “almost every year, we collect our basic necessities and shift to nearby school building. We feel humiliated when some members of other community laugh at us and pass comments on our vulnerabilities.” Further, “During the initial days, the authorities offer us food for our survival but just after the cyclone they forced us to leave the place as they do not wish us to stay any more in that shelter, because we belong to unwanted lower caste that possibly contaminate their school arena. We feel disturbed when we were forced to come back our home and see the pitiable condition of our houses. It’s difficult to cook for the scarcity of fuel wood. We lost all our savings. We keep asking members for the relief. Other than a bunch of polythene packages, we do not get any materials from Government. This is how it is almost every year. We urge the government to



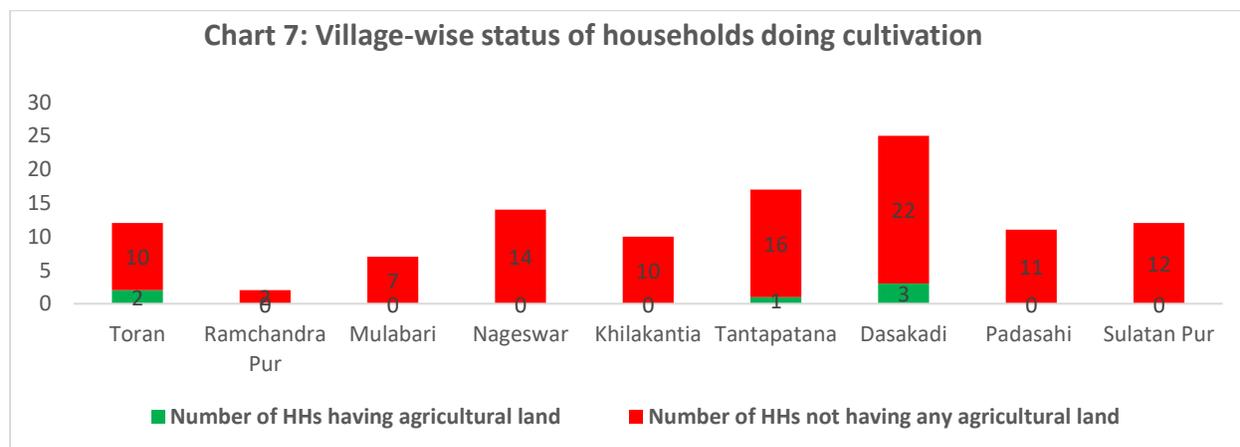
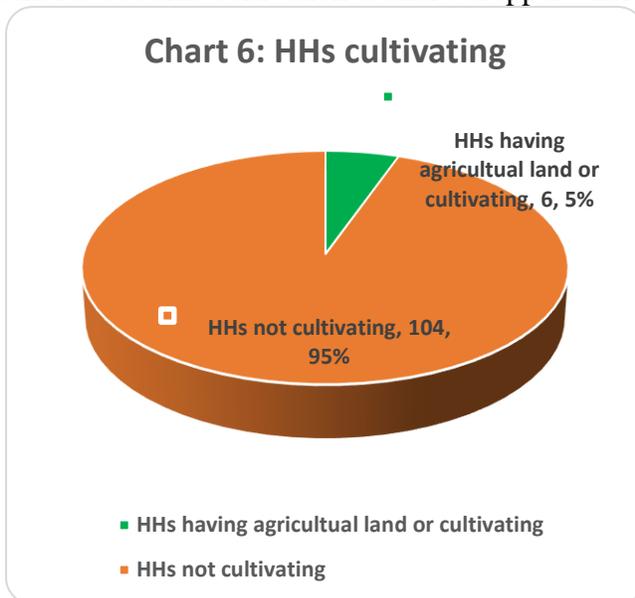
recognize the record of rights on our homestead land and build houses so that we can stay safe,” she added.

She belongs to Bhoi caste, a schedule caste by birth and married to a *Kela* – a nomadic family. As per the local social hierarchy system *Bhoi* caste is regarded as higher than the *Kela* community. She could speak Odia fluently.

3.5 Agricultural and/or other land holding

When most of the households do not even have tiny pieces of homestead land, they had even less agricultural and/or other land for production or food or manage their livelihoods. Chart 6 provides status of household cultivating. Out of 110 households surveyed, only two households in Toral village had some land holdings. Four other households do some cultivation as share-cropper where they manage all expenditure and pay about 2/7th of produce to the landowner. Only 13% of sample households are doing some kind of cultivation, either in their own land or as share-cropper.

The NTs and DNTs were never traditionally cultivators. Their foray into some forms of cultivation have been rather recent. Chart 7 provides village-wise status of households doing some forms of cultivation, either in own land or as share-cropper. In only three villages a total of six households or 5% of total sample households were doing some cultivation.



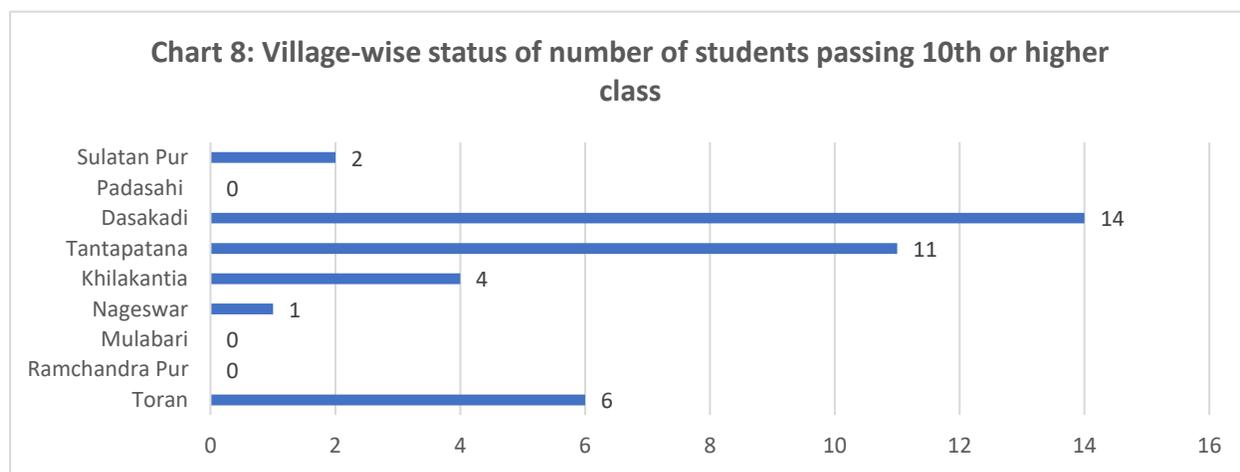
Landlessness among the NTs and DNTs is clearly evident from the Chart 7. From observation and interactions, some reasons for such landlessness came to the fore:

- i. Their ancestral and traditional occupational pattern which was nomadic in nature,
- ii. They have largely come from distant place and have settled here since about three to four generation. Hence, they do not have any ancestral, hereditary or traditional land access.
- iii. No government has made any serious target or attempt to provide them land or stable livelihoods. At best, such initiatives have been sporadic and person-centric.
- iv. They are still on the sideline of the polity. The NTs and DNTs do not draw much attention of mainstream political parties or leaders as they are not very significant in number. They have not even been serious contenders for Panchayat representatives. There hasn't been even a single Ward Member from NT and DNT community.
- v. Large scale illiteracy has been a major hindrance in accessing government schemes or supports.

In the study villages, it was observed that, the communities are not staying over the forest land i.e. *Khesara* or village forest land. Therefore, the community cannot claim rights over land as Individual Forest Rights or community forest rights as per Forest Rights Act, 2006.

3.6 Status of education

The study looked into this aspect of all 110 NT and DNT households living in the nine sample villages and found that only 38 persons have passed 10th or above. It means only one in every three NT DNT households had 10th or higher level of education. This abysmal figure tells the very poor status of education among youths and people of NT and DNT community. The status was relatively better in Daskadi village where *Matia* community reside. Tantapatana was next best. The irony was that no one in three villages, i.e., Ramchandrapur, Hatia Mulabari and Padasahi have passed



even 10th class. Chart 8 indicates number of students passing 10th or higher class from the sample NT/DNT households.

Schools near their habitations and midday meal act as an incentive. That is why small children go to the primary schools but drop-out later. One major disincentive for them is that teaching language medium. All government schools are Odia medium schools whereas they mostly speak Telegu and non-Odia language at their home. Members of *Matia* community speak Telugu dialect within the community. Their school going children communicate in Odia language. They have expressed desire for their children to study in their mother tongue (Telugu), if any provision available in school.

The community also shared their concern about quality of teaching in the government school. Others students go for tuition which the NT/DNTs cannot afford. The tuition charges range from Rs. 100 to 150 per month per child.

Children of the community are often reluctant to study in the school. Moreover, children work as care-givers to infant siblings after the parents leave for work, thus burdening them and their already precarious health, and they have no time for education. The elder ones at home take care of the younger ones. One primary reason for poor access to education is due to the problem of livelihoods security and sustenance. Children are initiated into income earning activities at a very tender age. They are not motivated to attend schools due to the perception that education does not ensure any livelihoods.

Lack of academic requirements, most nomadic community members do not qualify for basic jobs. However, they have expressed that there is no discrimination to their children within the schools. The study however also found some positive development. Many households evinced that they are now more aware and willing to send their children to school, even for higher education.

Case study 6: No caste certificate hindering education of the NT/DNT children

The study found many examples of exclusion due to non-issuance of caste certificate. Non-issuance of caste certificate has seriously affected education of many students as that has excluded them from many scholarship/grant/stipend and/or access to special schools and reservation in admission and jobs. The study found two major reasons for non-issuance of caste certificate in favour of NT/DNT households. The first is that most NT/DNT households do not have any land record in their name. The government officials are not issuing caste certificate. The other one is unique. Some *Ghusuria* households have land records in their name but somehow name of their caste has been recorded as ‘Sukara’, instead of ‘Ghusuria’. While *Ghusuria* has been recognised as have been recognised as Schedule Caste, the Suakara is not. The fact is that Ghusuri, the Odia term for pig, is also called as Sukara. Unfortunately, somehow, land records of the few households who have land have recorded their caste name as ‘Sukar’. This has denied them legitimate caste certificate and resultant exclusions have followed.



Photo: Chandan Das, a student of class VIII

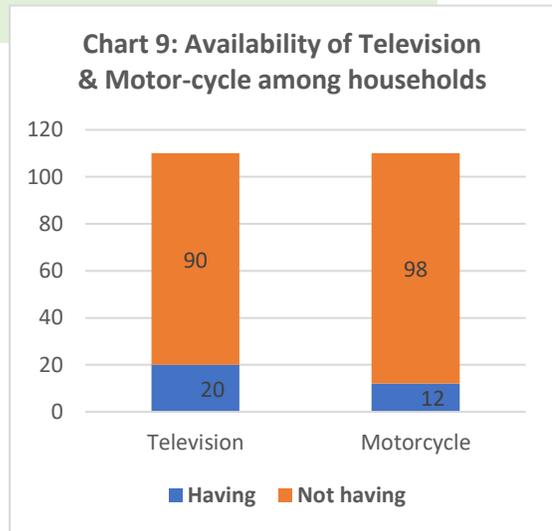


Photo: HSC certificate of Muna Das

Muna Das of Toran village is among the very few who have passed class 10th examination. But, he has been denied a caste certificate. Chandan Das is reading in class VIII. He has not got a caste certificate. This has denied him stipend, scholarship and other benefits meant for Schedule Caste students.

During Key Informant Interview with district level government officers District Level Officer, it was revealed that the Tahasildars are reluctant to issue caste certificate as the families have no legal documents relating their homestead land. Denial of

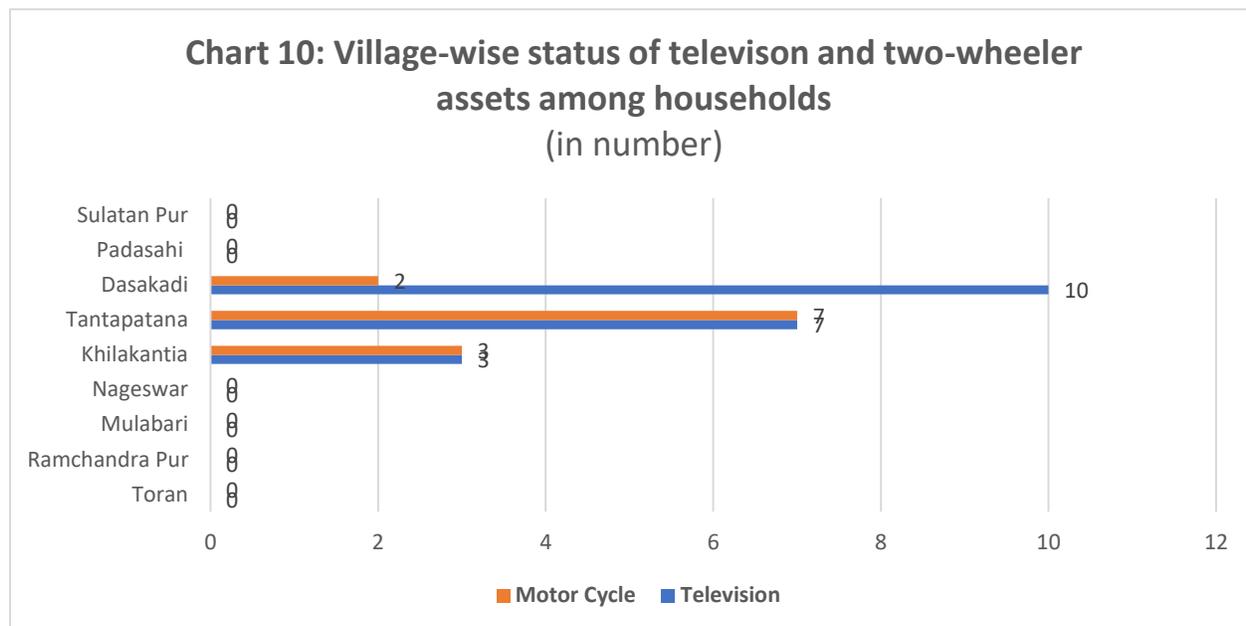
caste certificate due to this reason is in violation of *Odisha Caste Certificate Rule, 1980*. Section (5) of *Odisha Caste Certificate Rule* specifies that “...in order that certificates are issued to the deserving persons it is necessary that proper verification based primarily on revenue records and if need be, through reliable enquiries, is made before issue of certificates.” Hence, the revenue records are not the sole criteria for issuing certificates.



3.7 Household level assets

The study did not do an in-depth assessment of household level assets. However, it assessed access to some very commonly used assets such as motor-cycle, television and mobile phone. Chart 9 depicts the overall status of access to television and motor-cycle. Out of all the 110 sample households, only 20 households have television and even fewer, i.e., 12 households have a motorised two wheelers. This clearly tells their poor access to these two types of assets. But even this do not portray the actual status which is even worse. There are serious differences

among access to these two basic assets among different NTs and DNTs. Chart 10 shows village-wise status of access to these two types of assets.



As is evident from Chart 10, no NT DNT household in as many as six of the total nine sample villages had any motor-cycle and/or television tells the absolutely poor status of the households.

The pathetic living condition of the NT/DNTs get further glaring from the fact that barring a few households in one village, all other households are completely dependent on fire wood collection to cook food. None of the few households who have got gas connection under *Ujjwala* scheme have refilled the cylinder.

Case study 7: Even *Ujjwala* scheme eludes them

All 110 sample households depend on firewood collection for daily cooking. Except few households of Tantapatana village no other have received cooking gas connection under *Ujjwala* scheme.

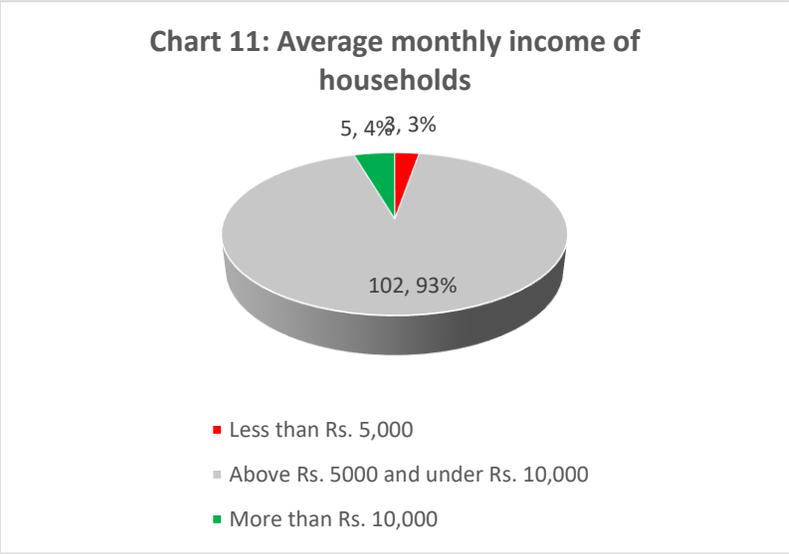
Bilas Shikari of Padasahi habitation spends nearly two to three hours in collecting fire-wood, for cooking and heating purposes. Earlier they used to procure wood from the road side. However, after the expansion of road and tree cutting, they collect the firewood from the backward of private houses supplemented from nearby forest.



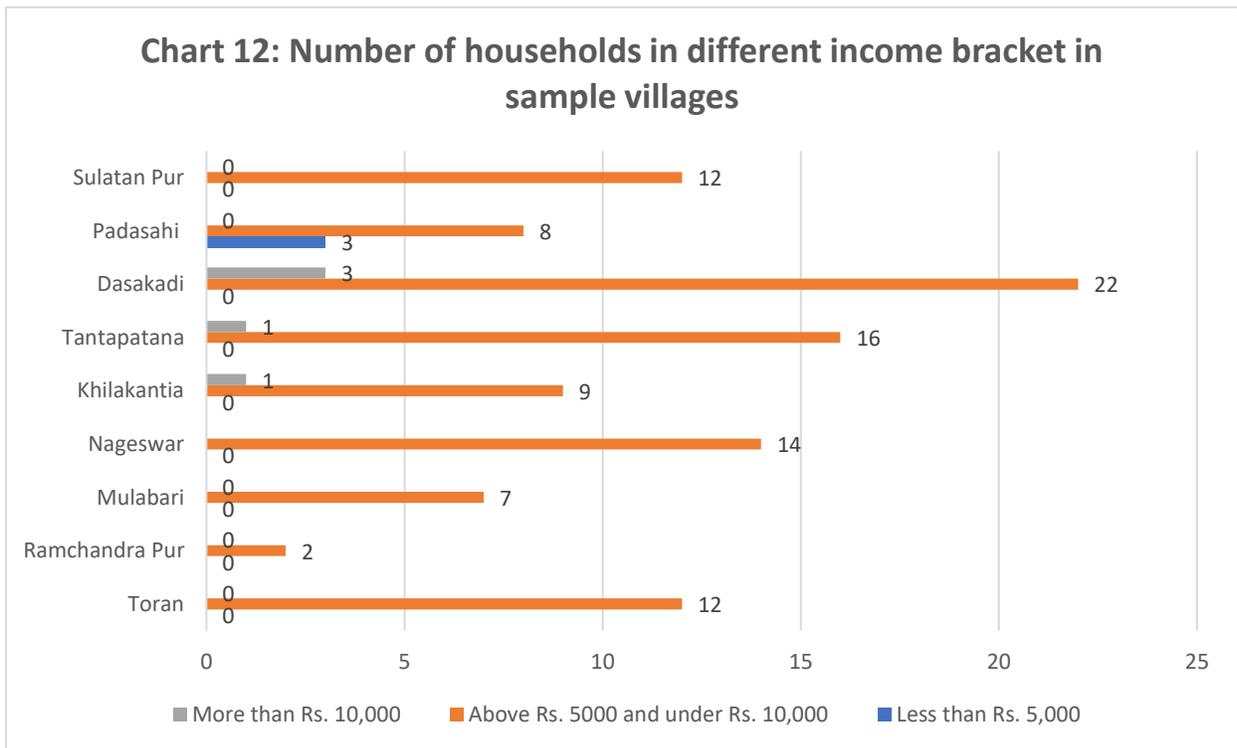
Photo: Ms. Bilash Shikari of Pada Sahi with her wood collection

3.8 Household level income

Getting information on annual income of people who are not very literate and do not keep records is not easy and may not be that accurate also. Hence, the effort to ascertain household income from this kind of a study carries inherent limitations. The information must not be seen or understood independently rather they should be seen along with other indicators such as housing, landholding, household assets etc. The study attempted to get information on household level income by posing a simple straight forward question to



respondents. The response may not be that accurate but they surely give an indication never-the-less. The average monthly household level income was only 8,400 rupees. Chart 11 indicates average monthly household-level income of the sample households. Out of the 110 sample households as high as 93% had an average monthly income ranging between 5,000 to 10,000 rupees. Only 4% households were earning an average of more than 10,000 a month while 3%



households were earning less than 5,000. Here also wide variation in monthly average income was found among NTs and DNTs of different villages. Economic status of communities in Padasahi village was quite worse. Chart 12 gives village-wise status of monthly household level income.

3.9 Livelihoods

Livelihood pattern and status of the sample population, though small and from one district, was quite diverse. To start with, the study found that only Table 6 indicates various livelihoods currently being practised. It does not provide weightage of livelihoods but gives a village-wise status of range of activities that different NTs and DNTs do to earn income and sustain their livelihoods.

Table 6: Various livelihoods sources of NT/DNT households in sample villages									
Earning source	Toran	Ramchandra Pur	Hatia Mulabari	Nageswar	Khilakantia	Dasabatia Tantapatana	Dasakadi	Padasahi	Sulatannagar
'Munda-pota' display for earning (traditional)				√				√	√
Pig Rearing (Traditional)		√	√		√	√			
Excavation of earth (traditional)							√		
Honey collection (Traditional)			√		√				
Selling of Mat / Broom Stick (Traditional)		√	√	√	√			√	
Begging	√	√	√	√	√			√	√
Share cropping/cultivation	√			√		√	√		√
Daily wage earner		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Chicken rearing at household level		√	√	√	√		√	√	√
Carpenter						√			
Mason			√			√			
Electrician						√			
Salaried job						√	√		

Only two households had one person each having some salaried income. As can be seen from the above, most of the NTs and DNTs still earn some of their livelihoods from traditional occupation. *Mundapotas* households residing in three villages are earning a part of their income from traditional occupation of begging by burying the head under the soil. The *Ghusurias* are still rearing pigs in four villages. The *Matias* of one village are still digging earth for livelihoods. Women folks of these NT and DNT households supplement the household income by begging

and/or selling mat or brooms etc. Most of the households keep a few chicken, mostly for their own consumption.

The traditional occupation of these NTs and DNTs never fetched them any decent income or respect. They were managing marginal living with those. The youths were found to uninterested in the traditional occupation for two major reasons, (a) they did not provide good income or respect, and (b) the scope of earning from those have dwindled further and have become even more disrespectful. This is so much so that during the study, the investigators found two distinct division of view-point among youths and seniors of *Ghusuria* communities.

Box 3: Only two persons in 110 households have some salaried income

The study looked into details of 110 NT/DNT households and found that only two youths had some kind of salaried income. Both were in low salaried jobs. One youth was from Dasbatia Tantapatana village and the other was from Dasakadi village.

Case study 8: In the middle of confusion – whether to pursue traditional occupation or not

Interestingly the study found that while the senior members of *Ghusuria* community were eager to pursue their traditional occupation of rearing pigs with further support from government and others, the youths were not very keen. They were of the opinion that rearing pigs is not being considered as a respectful occupation in the mainstream society. They were thus not interested to seek support for pig rearing. Rather, they evinced more interest in other occupations including wage earning, masonry, carpentering etc.

Livelihoods is a matter of major concern as the traditional means of living are wearing out. For these NTs/DNTs, it is not just a question of low-income but it is almost a concern of no-income. Their traditional technical skills and knowledge about environment, medicinal herbs, music, art, and other expertise are depleting. Their traditional occupations were never given due respect, but those are being considered with more disdain now. Those livelihoods are not just getting no respect, they do not provide them even a decent income. The study observed that many of them, mostly the youths, do not wish to engage any more. Most of them today look up to the government assistance, mercy from other agencies and daily wage earning. Thus, these people who were once independent have become dependent on others now.

The subsequent paragraphs in this section details out specific livelihoods features of distinct NT/DNTs covered in the study.

3.9.1 Observations on livelihood status of *Sabakhia Kela*

Traditionally both male and female members of *Sabakhia Kela* community are engaged in begging. Earlier they were bringing alms from the upper caste households in form of cooked food. The women members used to beg raw rice in the adjacent villages. When there is nothing else to do, especially women and children just go for begging. But begging, as they say, is full of hazards. Women and children who beg and live on the street are exposed to risk of becoming economically and sexually exploited. These children spend their childhood, living under terrible conditions.

They roam around 3-4 villages in a day and collect about 10 kg. of rice from begging. The alms vary during festival and marriage functions. Villagers from adjacent places invite them to have food during their marriage and other ceremonies. One of the major reasons they have been catapulted into begging is because they could not get benefit from many government schemes as they lack the required documents.

Case study 8: Marginal livelihoods going further awry

Mr. Dama Das and others of Khilakantia village in Brahamagiri block beg for their livelihood. Their socio-economic position has made them prone to abuses of upper caste members.



Ms. Rina Das of Toran village in Brahamagiri Block preparing for dinner.

‘Since the lockdown was imposed, I have been living on charity’ said Ms. Rina Das, Wife of Muna Das of Toran village in Brahamagiri Block. ‘Every morning, my sole objective is sourcing rice for the day. Sometimes I walk more than 5-6 kilometres in the adjacent villages to beg rice and fruits from the villagers. Earlier I used to go alone for begging. During

lockdown period, my daughter is accompanying me as her school is closed. Being with my daughter, there are possibilities of getting more rice from the villagers as alms’.

Few family members of *Sabakhia Kelas* are traditional medical practitioners among the villagers. For example, Mr. Indramani Das, the elder son of Late Kulamani Das of Ramchandrapur village of Brahamagiri block, is involved as a healer and provide traditional medicine to the ailing ones. However, it’s not a rewarding profession as the demand from the villagers is declining drastically.

Most youths of the community are into daily wage earning now. Unfortunately, other communities hold a very negative and negatively biased opinion about these people, especially about the women, due to the stigma of impurity being carried by these communities for centuries. Lack of or very limited inter-community interaction was a major observation of the study.

3.9.2 Observation on livelihoods status of *Mundapota Kela*

The *Mundapota Kelas* are entertainers by profession who sing and dance. They bury their heads into the earth and beg for alms from the public. Usually, they perform in public places and festivals. They make a hole in front of the house on the ground, put their head into it covered their head with the dugout soil and dangle their legs in the air covered with ashes while hold a rice pot. They put the pot before a house and do not stir until rice is poured into it. However, the onslaught of modern civilization has killed their skills up to a large extent. In Southern Odisha, *Mundapota Kelas* are called *Dubudubas*. In other parts of Odisha, they are known as *Mankada-diasi*. Their population is small.

They depend on the food provided by the villagers for performing dance and music in the village. They have a tradition not to repeat the performance in the same village during a particular period. They are guided by a thick moral order, strong community organization and value systems. Their relations with the other neighbouring communities and with their own members are based on cultural norms ironed out over long period that they abide by. Most of these patterns are institutionalized in terms of their movement cycles and customary relations with specific patrons. This pattern is now affected due to changes that have taken place over the last six to seven decades⁸.

Over the last decade, most of the members of this community discontinued their occupation terming it “undignified” and citing that it involves hard work. Local people and government are also dissuading them to continue this profession. However, after the lockdown imposed

8. [Madhukar Sanap, \(PDF\) Contemporary Issues of Nomadic and Denotified Tribes in Maharashtra \(Analytical Review | Madhukar Sanap - Academia.edu\)](#)

by government to control spread of Covid pandemic, some of them have started their traditional occupation as they do not have other options for their livelihood.



Photo: Women members from Mundapota Kela community of Sultan Nagar

age women of Sultan Nagar of Pipili block said that ‘our *Kela* communities are amongst the poorest in the state. The sudden lockdown announcement crushed our livelihoods. We were sleeping empty stomach almost every night.’

Case study 9: Lakhia’s distress during the pandemic and thereafter

Lakhia Shikari belongs to *Mundapota Kela* community. He resides in Sultan Nagar, a part of Pipili NAC. Burying head inside soil had been his occupation. He does not know anything else to earn. Covid pandemic time was nightmare for him. He said, ‘Because of Covid, we could not display our art in villages and hence we had no income. We are alive only because of rice given by the state government, without that we would have been dead by now.’ The situation was so bad that Lakhia and his wife decided to take food only once a day so that their children can eat at least twice.

Lakhia never had earned from any other source. Now, he is a daily wage labourer. Members of his community are increasingly resorting to wage labour. They work as agricultural labourer in other’s fields or as or construction worker. Currently they get a daily wage of Rs.300/400 for male members and Rs. 300/250 for female members. But, they do not get wage labour opportunity frequently. They mostly get wage opportunity during cropping season. Earlier, women and others could be



engaged in the agricultural works for longer period but as the deployment of machines in

agricultural work has increased over the years, the work-days have shrunk. Some members of Toran village are going to Puri town daily to ply cycle-rickshaw.

Due to illiteracy, other employment opportunities are limited for this community. Moreover, they lack vocational training.

3.9.3 Observations on livelihoods status of *Matia* community

25 *Matia* families have been living in Dasakadi hamlet of Sangalai Sasan village in Pipli block of Puri district for the last 3-4 generations. Their forefathers originally migrated from Andhra Pradesh. *Matia* community also lives in Satasankha, Nimapara, Patnaikia, Delanga areas of Puri District.

Matia community members do not undertake household work in other houses and they don't practice begging. They perform a sort of acrobatic dance, imitating monkeys and wild beasts and producing unusual sounds. Members of this community do not like to identify themselves as "*Kela*", since at the local level it undermines their self-dignity.

The word *Matia* comes from the Odia word "Mati", meaning - mud. The community is known as earth diggers. In both towns and villages, they are greatly in demand due to their hard work and skills in that work. They mostly speak Telugu and identify themselves as Telugu farmers. After coming to Odisha, they became fluent in Odia and adopted Pradhan as their title and identified themselves as Odia.

According to Thurston (1901), in Visakhapatnam, they were the hill cultivators migrated from the central provinces. According to another account, they are believed to be a sub-division of the *Gonds*. Some of them wear the sacred thread because the privilege was conferred upon their families by the former Rajas of Malkangiri where they resided. Using sacred thread is considered as a status symbol. They were said to eat with *Ranas*, drink with *Parojas*, but smoke only with their own people⁹.

They are known as skilled earth diggers; the local people invite them for excavation work to dig the soil for foundation work. They generally start work at early morning and continue till 10 - 11 pm and then come back to their home. They prefer to take their family members to the excavation site. They earn about Rs. 300 as daily wage for their work. However, they don't get regular engagement.

The villagers said contractors and people are preferring machine for digging works these days. To compete with machine, they too have changed their working style. Instead of daily wage,

9. Puri Chandrakant, Improving Access to Quality Education for the Nomadic Mendicant and Entertainer Tribes Status, Opportunities and Challenges 2016 [Denotified and Nomadic Tribes DNTs in Or.pdf](#)

they now charge five rupees for square feet of excavation. Delay in payment and irregular work is a major concern for them.

3.9.4 Pig-Rearing by *Ghusuria* community

The *Ghusuria* community members mostly depend on pig rearing. However, since the emergence of swine flu as an epidemic, the villagers compelled the community to stop pig-rearing. Community members of Khilakantia village were forced by other villagers to abandon the pig-rearing practice.

They have a particular system of borrowing pigs for rearing. Babuli Das of Ramchandrapur village borrowed one pig from their community member. His family is rearing the pig since the last 7-8 months. The agreement was that once the pig gives birth, the owner will take back the mother and half of newly born piglets.

In Guru Sahi of Purisadar block, five households are rearing pigs. They cannot rear cow, goats and sheep as it requires place like kraal or shed to keep. They stated that a pig of about 300 kgs fetches Rs. 2200 to Rs 2300 in the Kolkata city. Due to Covid pandemic and subsequent lockdown, they could not sell pigs which severely affected their livelihood.

It is observed that the older generation is mostly dependant on pig rearing as they do not have any other skills for livelihood. They are often humiliated & beaten up by the “upper-caste” people, in case of pig enters their paddy field. It is difficult to rear the pig as the grazing lands are gradually decreasing due to the forceful encroachment by the powerful people and village area expansion. The crop season, too, has changed due to the climate effect. As a result, there is less demand from the other community members to graze pigs (pala) in their agricultural land before agriculture season begins.



Photo: Papali Das showing the pig rearing farm in Mulabari village

On the contrary, the younger generation is not interested for pig rearing. Primarily because there is a stigma attached to it, and as it has come to be regarded as an “impure” profession. Hence the younger generations are interested mostly in other professions like carpentry, masonry and often some also wish to take unconventional approaches like videography and photography.

It was noticed that, earlier some community members were rearing goats, too. For example, the family members of Padasahi of Pipili Block reared goats, but after the frequent cyclones, they had to sell their goats in a distress-sale.

3.9.5 Traditional livelihoods of ‘honey collection’ and ‘broom/mat making’

Community members living in Mulabari, Khilakantia, and Toran villages collect honey. They sell it in nearby markets and in villages at the rate of Rs. 300 to Rs. 400 per kilogram. Members collecting honey informed that quantity collected is decreasing rapidly.

The *Kela* communities practice the skill of making brooms, mats and sell their products in the nearby villages. They are facing problems on two fronts, (i) availability of leaves decreasing and/or getting costlier, and (ii) stiff competition in the market as varieties of plastic materials are available at cheaper rate.

Case study 10: A skill that is giving more pain now



Community members of Ramachandrapur and Tantapatanas villages are involved in making broom of palm leaves. Mostly female members take up the activities. It takes about three hours to cut the leaves, one day to shape and about two days to stick and bind. However, they sell it for only Rs. 15 to 20 per broom. In a fortnight, they earn only about 300 to 400 rupees.

Parvati Giri of Tantapatana village broke down when she was asked about earning and situation during Covid pandemic time. She said, “everything is lost because of the lockdown. We usually get Rs 175- Rs 230, for a mat. However, the villagers blocked the road, and police didn’t allow us to procure raw materials and some did not allow us to take our mats to market. We could not procure materials and we could not sell it!”

3.10 Access to food and social security schemes

The good thing is that most of the NT/DNT community members have Aadhar Card, Election Identity Card, Ration Card and Job Card. They are availing rice and other materials under National Food Security Scheme and State Food Security Schemes. However, few of them were found to be left out. For example, in Toran village, out of 12 households only eight households have ration card.

The respondents covered under the food security schemes are buying rice from the ration shop at Rs 1/kg. Some households are also buying kerosene. Sugar was rarely bought, and when the need arose, some of the respondents said that they sold some quantity of the PDS rice in the open market and used the money to buy sugar. Almost all households expressed that they got rice during Covid pandemic which saved them.

Case Study 11: Struggle for access to Public Distribution System and food



Indramani Das is cursing his life. He, along with his family of seven members, lives in Ramachandrapur village. Somehow, his family is still to get including under the National Food Security scheme or State Food Security Scheme. He has no ration card and thus has no access to provisions supplied under Public Distribution System. They are buying from stores with their daily earnings. “We had applied for a ration card last year, but the application is still pending,” said Indramani Das. This has denied his family access to subsidised rice, kerosin, sugar and other provisions. Unfortunately, Indramani Das and his family is not alone. Only one household in his village has got ration card.



Ms. Sanju Das wife of Rajan Das lives in Mulabari village. She neither has an Aadhar card nor has her family a ration card. She has a curved finger.



Ms. Rina Das wife of Mr. Subala Das of Toran Village shared that “We have ration card, but that’s provide ration for 15-20 days only. For the remaining days we depend on begging. Covid made our situation worse. As lockdown was imposed, we were not allowed to enter the villages. That was very distressing time for us.”



Community members of Nageswar village described their acute suffering during pandemic lockdown periods. The common response during FGD with them can be summed as follows, ‘Generally, we have a family of three to five. We eat rice, with salt and chilies. Fearing an imminent shortage of rice, we tried to eat less’. They added,

“all their meagre savings are dried up as there was no earning at all. They resorted to begging but even that was not easy as villagers were closing road for outsiders and nobody was ready to come near us’. Earlier they were working as wage labours in agriculture fields. But, land owners now are more comfortable with mechanisation and hence their income opportunities have dried significantly even in normal times.

The pregnant and lactating mothers get their entitlements from Anganwadi centres. They are also availing the benefits from Mamata Scheme, which is a one-time payment of Rs. 5000.

Students are accessing Mid-Day Meal in the schools.

Most eligible persons are availing benefits of pensions schemes like Old Age Pension and Widow



Pension schemes. The study found instances of exclusion from such schemes. Prafulla Guru (Photo on the left) is an example of such exclusion. He is aged about 70 years and lives in a polythene shanty in Tantapatana village. He has an Aadhar card. ‘I am not getting old age pension in spite of repeated requests to the authorities’, says a perplexed Prafulla.

One of the most notable factor that has led to exclusion in varied fields is non-issuance of caste certificate. That issue has been dealt with in this report earlier. This needs to be looked into and all NT/DNTs need to be provided with appropriate caste certificates as non-issuance of caste certificate is an important cause from accessing various social security schemes, and access to education and health.

3.11 General health and access to health services

The study did not collect much quantitative data on diseases, morbidity, malnutrition etc. Most of information on health were collected during FGD. The quality of food consumed by the NT/DNT community members is absolute basic which can be summed as sufficient only to keep them alive. Their food mostly lack adequate nutritive value. Thus, malnutrition is a common phenomenon among them. One can invariably observe the bulged stomach with projected veins and the characteristic monkey face among the small children. So long they are capable of engaging themselves in physical work, they consider them healthy.

The staple food of the communities is *Pakhala* (watered-rice), often fermented. This is because each labor gets around Rs. 250 worth of weekly ration for a family of 4-5 members, which is insufficient. Most of them are unable to even buy rice. In such situation, expectant mothers, lactating mothers, children and the infants find themselves at the receiving ends of a diet that is terribly low on nutritive quality and quantity. Majority of the children suffer from malnutrition and vitamin deficiencies, which sometimes causes fatality. Besides, most of them live in unhygienic environments which trap them in the vicious disease cycles of a Jaundice, Malaria, Diarrhoea, Dysentery, TB etc.

However, the study did not find any discrimination in access to local government health facilities. However, their access to referral or speciality hospitals seemed to be a problem. Though NT/DNT households are among the poorest, all members have not yet been covered under the 'Biju Swastya Kalyan Yojna'. Hence, the community members are not being able to access speciality hospitals for want of money. However, the positive is that NT/DNT community members are increasingly getting aware of their health security and various health related government schemes.

3.12 Access to drinking water and sanitation

The study found that NT/DNT community's overall access to safe water was a major challenge in all sample villages. None of the sample households had tap water connection in their house. The NT/DNT hamlets are generally located at some distance from main habitation. The NT/DNT community members mostly use water from the tube wells near their habitations. NT/DNT habitation in Toran village has public standpost. But water supplied through that is highly saline and iron contaminated. The tube well of the habitation is also water quality affected. All the communities voiced the urgent need for the installation of more sources of water and supply of safe water. The good thing is community members, especially the youths, are more aware about water quality now.

Like other communities, it is also left to the NT/DNT community women to collect water. The community members mostly bath in open at the tube wells. Some photographs below capture the broad water and sanitation status.

Case study 12: Poor water and sanitation access



NT/DNT habitation in Toran villages have a public stand post near their habitation. On that count, they are better off than other NT/DNT habitations covered by the study. However, water supplied is not potable as it is highly saline.



This only tube-well caters to the needs of 12 households in Khilakantia.

3.13 Sanitation status

Only the NT/DNT households in Mulabari village of Brahamagiri block have individual household latrine which they built under Swachh Bharat Mission. Most NTs and DNTS households are still practicing open defecation as they don't have toilet facilities. These households could not access individual household toilets provisions under Swachh Bharat Mission as they do not own any land or they do not have recognition of land rights. Even the households of Mulabari village, who have toilets, do not normally use the toilets. But, some of them do use the latrines. The study could not find any public or common toilet facilities in any of the sample villages.

The study observed that overall sanitation and hygiene condition of the NT/DNT households and habitations are poorer even to the already poor condition of the villages. Their habitations are mostly located in difficult places – in low lands, near swamp etc.

3.14 Other observations

The study observed NT/DNTs participation in other aspects, including community institutions, religion/cultural practices etc.

3.14.1 Participation in Self-Help Groups (SHG)

We are in a time when almost every rural woman is a member of a SHG. However, the study found that participation of NT/DNT members in SHG was quite insignificant in the study villages. NT/DNT were members of some SHG in only four of nine sample villages. In other words, members of NT/DNT community are yet to form or be members of an SHG in as many as five of nine sample villages. In Nageswar village, the women members are part of two different groups i.e., Maa Durga group and Triveni group. The upper-caste women are also members of the group. As women of *Kela* families are mostly illiterate, they depend upon the upper-caste members for calculations relating to money. They take loan from the groups in times of urgency. In Tanta Patna village, women members are the part of self-help groups and contribute Rs. 60 per month per family. They could get Rs. 1,00,000 from Government as loan and spend the money for the daughter's marriages. *Matia* community of Sangalai Sasan village had formed four self-help groups (SHG) years back. They could not manage the SHG due to illiteracy.

3.14.2 Dispute resolution

Like other communities, the NTs and DNTs depend on the political institution for discipline and dispute resolution mechanism. They have their caste Panchayat which is called *Desha*. The community discourages visit to police station due to fear of harassment, unnecessary interrogations leading to an expensive affair. They try to settle their disputes within the community. The NT/DNT community lives in a cluster of 5-30 households, each headed by an elder who wields the authority to settle disputes. Caste Panchayats among *Kela* communities are andro-centric. The men generally speak and women hardly make their voice in the caste panchayat meeting. They have their *jati* panchayat where both men and women participate. The caste panchayat is held once in a year and settle pending disputes mainly related to matrimony, marital discords and property distribution. All adult male persons are members of the village panchayat. The village headman is called *Mukhia* or *Sardar*. The *Mukhia* presides over the village panchayat and adjudicates cases relating to breach of social customs, norms and taboos. The judgement given by the *Mukhia* is expected to be obeyed by one and all. For the culprit, they have a system to award punishments. *Dakua*, a village messenger assists the *Mukhia* during such transactions. It was observed that the NT/DNT communities are quite eager to solve internal disputes by following their traditional systems and no major disputes have arisen.

3.14.3 Culture and tradition

The NT/DNT communities like *Mundapota Kela* and *Sabakhia Kela* are characterized by a distinct culture that is reflected in their beliefs, customs and traditional practices. *Kela* community practices a hereditary occupation and often speak in Telugu language.

These communities worship many Hindu gods along with local deities. They believe in supernatural elements and ancestral spirits that they hope will benefit them. The *Sabakhia Kela* perform Barah Puja or Gotha Puja on Kumar Purnima/Pausa Purnima. They used to have annual meeting once in a year where only men participate. They assimilate at Gandilo village of Balipatna Chhok of Khordha district to perform their annual meeting. In every hamlet of *Sabakhia Kela* members offer prayers to goddess the Jogamaya, Mangala and Saraswati.



Photo: Sabakhia Kela community worships the goddess Basanti, Jogmaya and Sarswati at Mulabari village

They observe rites and rituals from birth or death as per the Odia-Hindu traditions. In rituals, they have their sub-caste religious leader who offers puja. During the visit, it was found that in Gurusahi of Puri sadar block, the Brahmin priest has been inducted to perform rituals during the marriage ceremony of *Sabakhia Kela*. The community members pay raw vegetables to Brahmin priest for offering Puja. Moreover, they believe on sorcerer locally called as ‘*Gunias*’. They believe that some evil power is responsible for the emergence of diseases.

The community members of *Mundapota Kela* perform *Hunka Puja* locally known as *Jantala*. It is worship to the *Sakti* cult. They worship *Banadurga* in the month of *Chaitra* and *Baisakha* that falls in the month of May or June. They spend around Rs.10,000 per year for three-day long festival. Each household contributes Rs. 500 to Rs. 1000 and invite relatives and friends to observe the festivities together. They celebrate their festivals wearing new clothes, taking meat, rice and liquor etc. which are expensive.

The *Matia* community observe the Odia-Hindu festivals. They celebrate *Makar Parbaas* as a principal festival. On this occasion, they buy new dresses and spend money for food and

entertainment. They offer chicken as sacrificial birds to invoke benevolent spirits to bless them. Hence, they take loan from others with higher rate of interest.

For death rituals, *Matias* observe creational rituals while taking the dead in to funeral pyre and drink country liquor in their memory. They observe the ritual for three days to get rid of death pollution unlike the Hindus who observe ritual for 11 days.

The *Matia* community members of Sangulai Sasan village stated that there are no untouchable practices in their village. There is no discrimination in the burial ground. However, they have access to temple in other villages but forbidden to enter into their village temple. They offer Puja to their deity- *Banadurga*.

3.14.4 Marriage system

During our study, we found that earlier there was rampant early marriage system. They don't wait for the legal age of marriage. The boys of 15 to 16 years of age and the girls of 12 and 13 get married. Girls were becoming mother at very early age. This has been evidenced from the infant and mother mortality rate. Now the NTs and DNTs communities are increasingly becoming conscious of the repercussions of such a system.

The parents of bridegroom initiate the proposal and visit bride's place. Then, the negotiation starts. The love marriage generally occurs within their sub-caste, however, there are a very few inter caste marriages reported. Earlier the marriage was not expensive affair. They didn't have the practice of dowry system. However, recently, the community is adopting the dowry system, and as a result parents are worried for the daughters' marriage. Now some of them are they are debt trapped for daughter's marriage.

3.14.5 Status of women

The preference for male child was starkly observed. The *Kelas* prefer to live in nuclear families for obvious economic and cultural reasons. The father being the senior most male member is regarded as the head of the family. The family property is inherited along the male line. After marriage, a daughter leaves her parental house and joins the family of her parents-in-laws. This custom shows that the *Kela* family is patriarchal and women don't participate in decision-making processes of customary practices and traditions. Due to illiteracy and economic poverty, they have difficulties in finding any gainful employment. The life and livelihood of this community is very hard being difficult surrounded by circumstances full of trauma, agony and turbulence, from which their women suffer the most. Taking liquor is a common phenomenon in most of the *Kela* communities. This has been an integral part of their cultural food habits for centuries.

3.14.6 Loan and mortgage system

NT/DNT community members generally avoid the mortgage system as they have nothing to mortgage. In case of emergency, like marriage, death and birth rituals, they borrow money to meet the exigencies and are used to paying Rs. 4 to Rs 5 of interests per Rs. 100 per month. Some SHG members in four villages have taken loans through SHGs.

3.15 General observation on social and political participation/discrimination

3.15.1 Social discrimination

In all sample villages, the study found that, NT/DNT community members are being discriminated on caste lines. All NT/DNT members are treated as the most inferior. In all location, their settlements were at some distance from main habitations of general communities.

The NTs and DNT communities generally live in a remote part of the village in an unhygienic condition. They are confronted with barriers of discrimination and exclusion. Caste segregation has contributed to this marginalization significantly. They face public humiliation. Incidences of discrimination at places like hotels, temples, public transportation systems, hospitals, panchayat office and other public services is quite evident. Despite the restriction on such discriminatory behaviours by law and constitutional guarantees of equality, hierarchical social norms and historical prejudices continue affect the *Kela* communities. Physical contact with members of upper caste communities is forbidden because they are considered “impure”. Thus, they are made to eat from different utensils and restricted from the facilities frequented by members of the “upper-castes”. These incidents are largely unreported because caste bias often extends to local law enforcement agencies and the media.

3.15.2 Low confidence

The study clearly found a definite lack of self-respect and confidence among the community members, including youths. The reason may be attributed to prolonged sub-human treatment. It seemed that atrocities and discriminatory treatments has led them to accept such status as normal. Prolonged biases has imbibed a feeling in them that they deserve such ill-treatment. They either do not have the confidence or means to take up such discriminatory treatments legally.

Hence, it is important to create awareness that to be back in the mainstream they need to be mentally prepared to live their life depending on their hard work unlike the life under poverty and oppression. These are the general observations of the issues, therefore to work on the livelihood issues of NT/DNT we need to address root causes of poverty and exclusion;

empowering people to participate and question; enhancing the rights of women through coordinated action; direct action of poor and excluded people¹⁰.

3.15.3 Participation in mainstream political processes

The study observed that the NT/DNTs do participate in the election voting process regularly. However, nil to low representation of the community in the *Panchayatiraj* system and local political set up. Their thin and scattered population probably is a major reason as the group is not considered as important enough in electoral politics. Further, their illiteracy and distinct culture is probably the other major hindrance.

They are not able to exert pressure on the local authorities and influence the political parties. In none of the sample villages any community member has become *Sarapanch* or Samiti Member or Zilla Parishad member. This community occasionally participates in the *Pallisabha* or *Gram Sabha*. Many times, the Panchayat members do not inform the date and place of *Pallisabha* or *Gram Sabha*. Even when they participate, their demands are hardly given emphases as they are few in number. They continue to be denied access to information, and proper representation or participation in village level meetings. As a result, they are excluded from land allotment decisions.

10. [Madhukar Sanap, \(PDF\) Contemporary Issues of Nomadic and Denotified Tribes in Maharashtra \(Analytical Review | Madhukar Sanap - Academia.edu\)](#)

4 RECOMMENDATION

From findings and observations, the study is making the following recommendations.

4.1 Recommendations related to housing, homestead land and agricultural land

- Government should provide homestead land to the landless NTs and DNTs within a given time frame in a target mode as per the Odisha Prevention of Land Encroachment Act 1972 and under various schemes such as Vasundhara, Mo Jami Mo Diha schemes.
- All NT/DNT households need to be provided with pucca house under various government schemes including PMAY, Biju Pakka Ghara Jojana etc. Careful attention towards preserving cultural rights and social practices of the community is essential while planning housing and habitation for the NT/DNTs.
- Special action for supply of electric connection, drinking water connection, household level toilet and cooking gas connection to all NT/DNT households.
- The NT/DNT habitations need special attention for drainage and safe sanitation.
- Study found that barring six households no other NT/DNT household had agricultural land possession. Government may initiate a special scheme for them to allot cultivable land to the NT/DNTs as their traditional occupations are shrinking and disintegrating rapidly.

4.2 Recommendations related to livelihood and occupation

- Government needs to develop and implement special schemes for providing support for traditional/supplementary and alternative livelihoods of the NT/DNTs.
- Special drives for skill enhancement of NT/DNT youths and women needs to be undertaken.
- The government should provide loan and training to people in order to help them hone and utilise their skills. Particularly to develop their designs of mat and broom making processes. Hopeful entrepreneurs must be provided with financial help. The procedures of the providing loan should be simple so that semi-literate and illiterate members of NT & DNT would access the facilities and benefits without much difficulty.
- Communities doing with traditional dance and drama for living need to be provided state patronage for enhancing their income and respect.
- Existing traditional knowledge on medicine can be encouraged by creating awareness about mainstream science and technology.
- There is a need to provide access to fully developed market places to these communities in the market outlets of district headquarters and the city. Their produces do not get favourable

response from the modern markets as they lack access to them. These communities cater to the needs of the poor and make a living out of sale of their produce of labour like making mat, broom etc.

4.3 Recommendations related to social security

- Government needs to take up a detailed survey of caste enumeration and have a relook at the process of issuing caste certificate. Cases of denial of caste certificate to NT/DNTs is a serious issue that must be looked into urgently.
- The States and district authorities should undertake the exercise of issuing Ration Cards to NTs and DNTs families by organizing a special campaign both for urban and rural areas.
- Since NTs and DNTs have not been enumerated in the census, it is necessary that the States/UTs undertake a quick house to house survey of the families of NTs / DNTs to work out their estimated population and their concentration in various regions/districts of Odisha. This process may be completed in six months. However, to have a correct estimate of their population in India, it is desirable that the Union Government initiate steps to separately enumerate NTs and DNTs in the next census due in 2021.
- Make the provision of separate welfare schemes for their development and work out the financial implications. An Advisory Committee should be constituted at the State and district level. The Committee may include prominent anthropologists and sociologists, activists and community leaders of NTs and DNTs in addition to concerned senior officers of the State Govt./UT Administration. This Committees may hold its meetings at least every three months and may review and monitor the progress of various welfare schemes being implemented in the State/District for NTs and DNTs and may draw up future action plans.
- The NTs and DNTs have been included either in the list of SCs, STs, or the OBCs from time to time. However, the NTs and DNTs have not been able to take the benefit of various developmental schemes. In order to enable the NTs and DNTs to avail benefits of various developmental schemes being implemented for the poor, it is necessary that the Union and State Governments frame and implement separate welfare schemes for them as a separate target group irrespective of the fact whether they belong to SCs, STs or OBCs.
- The unemployed youths of the NTs and DNTs should be provided with stipends as a measure of social security.

4.4 Recommendations related to education

- There is a need for inclusion of children in school as well as opening up of more schools specifically for NT and DNT children, with provisions for scholarships to them. Facilitate

access to education, including more vigilant monitoring of the quality of educations. It may include creative devising of 'mobile schools' for the migrant section of *Kelas*.

- To further strengthen the educational infrastructure for NTs and DNTs, the Government needs to open residential schools separately for boys and girls in the areas inhabited by NTs and DNTs for upper primary students.
- Provide stipend/scholarships to all NT and DNT students.
- The incidences of non-issuance of caste certificate must be looked into seriously. Government needs to issue appropriate notification and order to concerned Tahasildar and revenue department officials.

4.5 Recommendations related to governance

- The government must ensure the participation of NTs and DNTs communities especially women members in the *Palli Sabha* and *Gram Sabha*.
- Training programs should be carried out to sensitize law enforcement authorities, state and local authorities, civil society and the general public about issues, challenges and lifestyles of nomadic communities to sensitize them about differing ways of life.
- Promote public awareness and re-education by advocating against caste discrimination and awareness of protective provisions of the law under the Protection of Civil Rights (PCR) Act, 1955 and Prevention of Atrocities Act (POA) Act 1989.
- Undertake the comprehensive socio-economic study of NTs and DNTs living in the different parts of Odisha. The SC/ST department needs to launch a special programme for this. Appropriate schemes for development of NT/DNTs and their further inclusion should be rolled out based on such findings.
- There is a need to take up special development programmes in line with special programmes for primitive tribes. Government also needs to think of a special commission for the NT/DNTs.

5 CONCLUSION

The survey is only a small initial step to gauge the socio-economic situation of NT DNT communities, as well as to assess and identify the gaps in the community's access to existing programs. The scope of the study was limited as it looked into aspects of four NT/DNT communities residing in Puri district. However, the study has opened up pathways for more detailed enquiries by shining light on the hitherto unnoticed issues of NT/DNT communities. The study underlines that the fact that the NT/DNTs have, by far, remained far behind in the developmental arc of the country. Modern notions of citizenship which define a person's rights in a country as well a method to safeguard them, have not been able to touch their lives. The NT/DNTs suffer enormously in the margins of the society without any social, political as well as economic strength.

The significant problem of the present for the community is one of livelihood, and there seems to be no way out of it. This economic problem is entangled and worsened by the burden of social stigma that caste brings into their lives, as well the poor social policy planning by successive governments which have rendered them alone without any social welfare aid. This has forced them to live an invisible life in a democratic country. Only an integrated approach, where different ministries and implementing agencies, could come together to ensure that either the ongoing programs can be specifically delivered to NTs and DNTs or new policies can be made to fit their requirements will ensure their security.

On the other end, although the NTs and DNTs constitute a large proportion of the population of the country, they have not received much scholarly attention. There is a need to undertake a comprehensive study along these lines in different parts of country, too. Such a study would need to cover not only the socio-economic aspects of NTs and DNTs but also the institutional mechanisms necessary to deliver justice to the NTs and DNTs. There is a need to engage in an honest and open dialogue, to examine the ways in which discrimination continues to exist, and to ensure that members of DNT-NTs are able to live freely, without the burden of discrimination and abuse, and with adequate institutional safeguards to protect their life and liberty in the country.

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