

# The Tribal Society of Mayurbhanj, Odisha

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**Abstract:** Tribes are considered one of the most backward and isolated communities worldwide. Their livelihood and socio-economic status are restrained to the direct utilization of natural resources. They completely depend upon nature for their survival. Odisha is a backward state in India but it is rich in tradition, culture, and natural resources. The people of the forest and hill tract are the original ancestors of Odisha today consider as tribes. Out of thirty districts in Odisha, nine are considered tribal regions among them Mayurbhanj occupies the second position in Tribal concentration. The present study tries to explain the different tribal community of Mayurbhanj their demographic and social status as well as their occupational structure. This paper gives a comprehensive idea about the tribes in Mayurbhanj. From the analysis, it is clear that it's very difficult to bring the tribes into the mainstream of society though there were a lot of tribal development programs implemented by both center as well as the state. Among all the tribal communities in Mayurbhanj, only Santhal and Bhumja are considered civilized. But still, now socio-economic disparities among the different clans and gender continue to be a dominant dilemma in tribal regions.

**Keywords:** Tribe, Socio-economic disparity, Livelihood, Demography.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Scheduled tribes consider the weaker and more vulnerable section of all the communities in Odisha. A tribe is in an ideal state, a self-contained unit that constitutes a society in itself [1]. There are 62 tribes in Odisha that were mainly concentrated in six districts of Odisha declared as completely tribal districts Raygada, Nabarangpur, Mayurbhanj, Koraput, Malkangiri, and Sundargarh. The majority of people living in Mayurbhanj, Odisha were tribes.

They believe the forest is their mother and depend on forest resources for their livelihood. These people survive on agricultural products, minor forest resources, and the hunting of wild animals. There are about 58 percent of the people are tribes here among them Santhal Mahali, Saunti, Bhumji, Bathundi, Munda, Gond, Kol, Mankirdia, Lodha, Baiga, Hill Kharia, etc [2]. Among all these regional tribes of the Mayurbhanj District, the Kolhas and Bhumji are the most popular tribe concentrated here. Though they are scattered all over the district major concentration of the Santhal and Bhumji communities is found in every block of the district whereas Lodha, Mankirdia, and Kharia are concentrated in the hilly tracts of Similipal, Morada, and suilapada blocks of Baripada. They collect forest resources such as nuts, flowers, leaf of the Sal- trees for their survival. Hunting is one of the major livelihood mediums for their food and nutrition. Their nutrition depends on these fruits, nuts, agricultural products, and meat, also build their home with wood and bamboo.

Tribes of this region also work as daily labourers in agricultural activities and small-scale industries.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a survey on tribal movement was conducted in India by the Anthropological Survey of India (ASI) which give information about 36 ongoing tribal movements among them 14 of these tribe concentrated only in the northeast region of India. [3]. These studies explain the strong land-owning tribal communities like Munda Santhal, Bhilla, Gonda etc. The tribe also involves themselves in agricultural activities, mining, and industry as well as. They also explore their lives in urban areas in hope of reservation in jobs and better livelihood opportunities.

There was a complex identification of the tribe in Indian society. It is described as the tribe being a colonial construction [4]. But this statement did not define the uniqueness of tribes though they considered themselves different from other social groups. The term tribe since the sixteenth-century reasonings to groups or communities living in underdeveloped conditions [5]. This study demonstrates the journey of tribal communities with the need to provide detailed and classified knowledge about tribes, their cultural life, and their livelihood system. Narzary, P. K., & Sharma, S. M. [6] endeavor to examine the daughter's preference in tribal societies of Meghalaya, India. The socio-Cultural History of the Hill Kharia Tribe of Mayurbhanj district, Odisha was studied by Tudu, F. [7] which describes the socio-cultural status of the Kharia tribe of Mayurbhanja. The economy of the Kharia has related to agriculture and forest for all the economic activities of the tribe are based on agriculture directly and indirectly. There was a critical analysis of Changing Tribal Livelihood Patterns through MGNREGA: A Study of Mayurbhanj District of Odisha by Hembrom, S. [8]. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) which is act as a "silver bullet" for eradicating rural poverty and unemployment, generating demand for a productive workforce in tribal villages.

### III. STUDY AREA

Mayurbhanj is a landlocked district with a total geographical area of 10418 Sq.km. which is situated in the Northern part of the state with district headquarters at Baripada. The district lies between 21degree 17 minutes and 22-degree 34 minutes north latitude and 85degree 40minute and 87 degrees 10 minutes east longitude. The district is bounded in the North-East by the Midnapure district of West Bengal, Singhbhum district of Jharkhand in the North-west, Balasore district in the South-East, and Kendujhar in the South-West. The district contains four numbers of Sub-divisions with 26 numbers of blocks 382 Gram Panchayats and 3945 villages

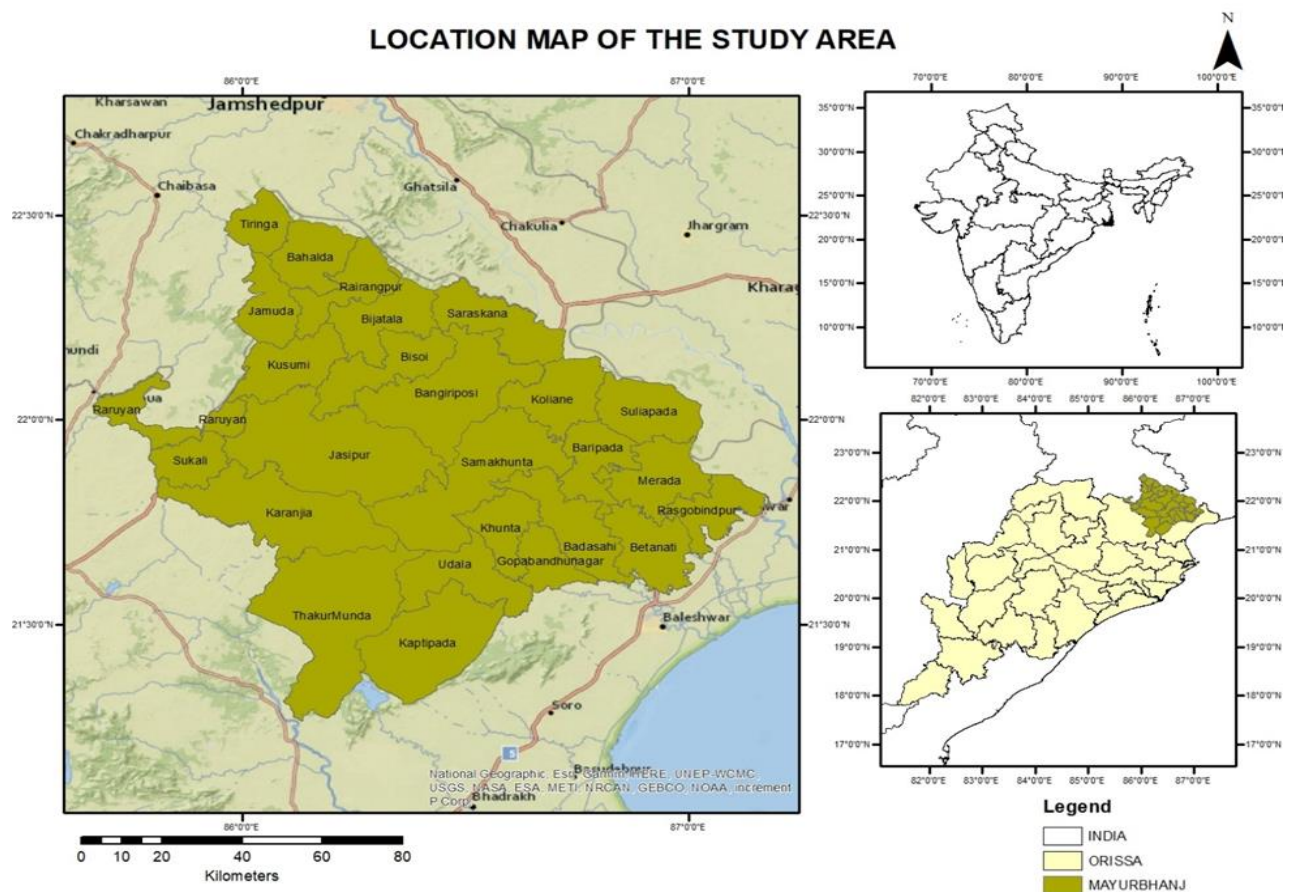


Fig. 1: Study area

### IV. OBJECTIVE

The objective of the study is to attain a sharpened understanding of the tribal society which includes –the concentration and distribution of tribes in Mayurbhanj, their livelihood pattern and social status as well as their cultural world.

## V. SOURCE OF DATA AND METHODS OF ANALYSIS

The analysis is purely based on secondary data which is collected from various secondary sources are-(i)The District Statistical handbook, Mayurbhanj-2020,(ii) ST and SC Development, Minorities, and Backward classes welfare department(<http://www.stscodisha.gov.in>), (iii) SC & ST Research and Training Institute, Bhubaneswar, (iv) Census of India-2011. Maps have been prepared based on secondary data by using Arc-GIS software v.10.8 and diagrams are prepared by Microsoft Office Excel.

## VI. TRIBAL POPULATION IN MAYURBHANJ

TABLE I: YEAR WISE TRIBAL POPULATION IN MAYURBHANJ

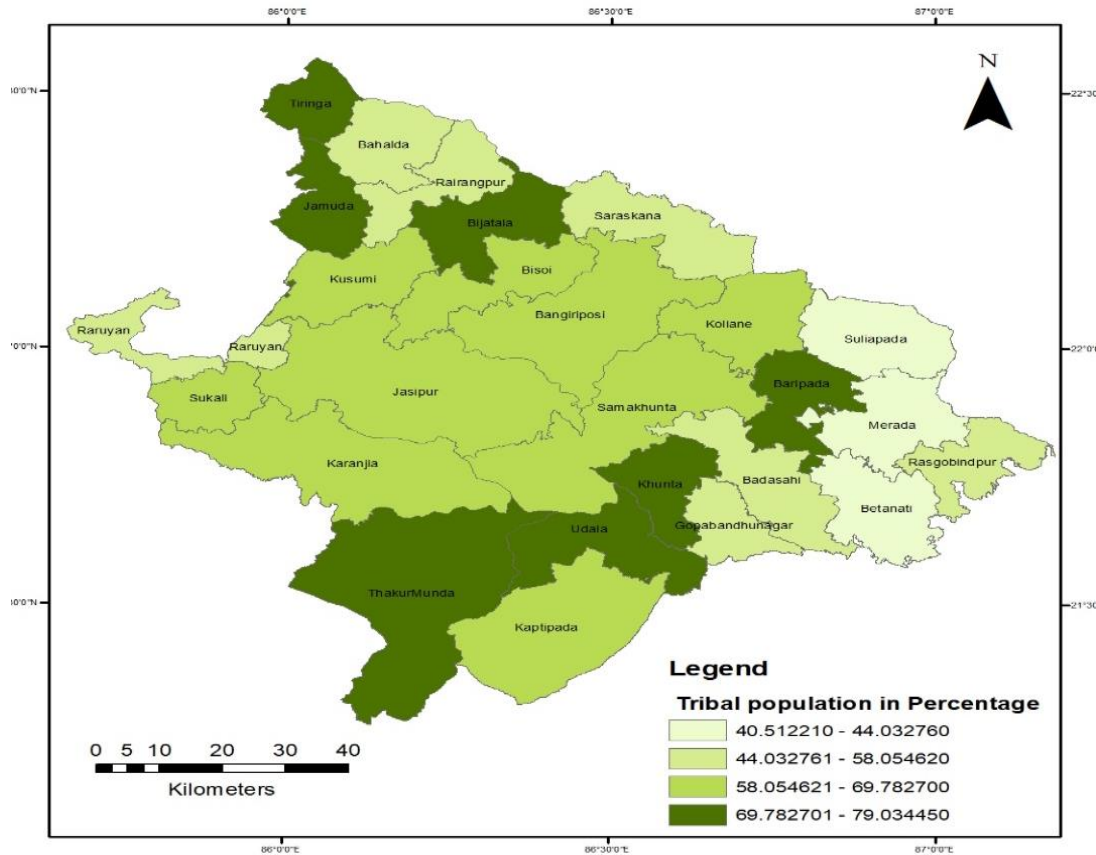
Census year	Total population	Tribal Population	Percentage of tribal population
1961	1204043	729764	60.61
1971	1434200	839853	58.56
1981	1581873	912320	57.67
1991	1884580	1090626	57.87
2001	2223456	1258459	56.59
2011	2519738	1479576	58.7

Out of 26 Blocks, the tribal are mostly concentrated in Khunta, Bijatala, Tiringi, Thakurmuda, and Jamda, where their population is more than 70 percent of the total population of respective Blocks. The majority tribal of Mayurbhanj are the Santals, Kolha, Bathudi, and Bhumija. The Santhals are the main inhabitant of the Bijatola block where they constitute about 77% of its total population. The majority tribal of Mayurbhanj are the Santals, Kolha, Bathudi, and Bhumija. According to the 2011 census, the population percentage of some of the major tribes in the total tribal population of the district are Santal (43.13%), Kolha (17.67%), Bhumija (11.69%), Bathudi (8.04%), Bhuyan (4.26%), Ho (3.02%), Gonds (2.09%), Munda (1.95%), Saunti (1.93%) and Kharia (1.56%). The tribal population is highest in Khunta Block (79.03%). About 68.84% of tribes reside in rural areas of the district as compared to urban areas. The Santhals are more developed as compared to Kharia, and Mankardia.

TABLE II: BLOCK WISE TOTAL POPULATION AND TRIBAL POPULATION BY SEX IN MAYURBHANJ DISTRICT (2011 CENSUS)

Name of the blocks	Total population		Total	Schedule Tribe Population		Total	Percentage
	Male	Female		Males	Females		
Khunta	36466	37689	74155	28717	29891	58608	79.03445
Bijatala	31684	32509	64193	23842	24785	48627	75.75125
Thakurmunda	51220	53474	104694	38131	40311	78442	74.92502
Tiring	28223	28853	57076	20837	21722	42559	74.56549
Udala	38104	38043	76147	28277	28365	56642	74.38507
Baripada	35587	34195	69782	26255	25461	51716	74.1108
Jamda	28784	30618	59402	20935	22704	43639	73.46386
Jashipur	49862	51196	101058	34512	36009	70521	69.7827
Bangirposi	51880	52000	103880	35821	36541	72362	69.65922
Bisoi	36357	38215	74572	24848	26875	51723	69.35981
Karanjia	45310	46208	91518	30497	31613	62110	67.86643
Samakhunta	39892	39991	79883	26410	26896	53306	66.73009
Kaptipada	74462	74255	148717	49275	49778	99053	66.60503
Kuliana	50722	50429	101151	33302	33743	67045	66.28209
Kusumi	45530	47586	93116	28924	30834	59758	64.17587
Sukuruli	29823	30754	60577	18578	19568	38146	62.97109
Bahalda	42727	43354	86081	24520	25454	49974	58.05462
Saraskana	50904	49912	100816	29227	29110	58337	57.86482
Gopabandhunagar	37452	37893	75345	20459	21253	41712	55.36134
Rasgovindapur	48808	47718	96526	26568	26147	52715	54.61223

Rruan	33093	33411	66504	17600	18070	35670	53.63587
Rairangpur	29715	30850	60565	15742	16660	32402	53.49955
Badasahai	73567	72665	146232	37155	36965	74120	50.68658
Murada	51577	52198	103775	22801	22894	45695	44.03276
Betnoti	75706	74728	150434	30929	30951	61880	41.13432
Suliapada	51425	50838	102263	20902	20527	41429	40.51221



**Fig. 2: Block-wise concentration of tribal population**

Among the 26 blocks of Mayurbhanj, only three blocks Murada, Betonati, and Suliapada have less than 50% of tribal concentration whereas seven blocks have a tribal concentration of more than 70 percent. Khunta block was inhabited by the highest percentage (79%) of tribes which belongs to the Santhal community.

**VII. LITERACY STATUS OF TRIBE**

Education is considered the backbone of any society. Thus, the rate of literacy plays an important role to analyse the social status of any community.

**TABLE III: LITERACY RATE OF TOTAL POPULATION AND ST POPULATION IN ODISHA \*source: census of India-2011**

Census year	Percentage of literacy		
	Total literacy rate in Odisha	Tribal literacy rate in Odisha	Tribal disparity
1961	21.66	7.36	14.30
1971	26.18	9.4	16.72
1981	34.23	13.96	20.27
1991	49.09	22.31	26.78
2001	63.08	37.37	25.71
2011	73.45	52.2	21.25

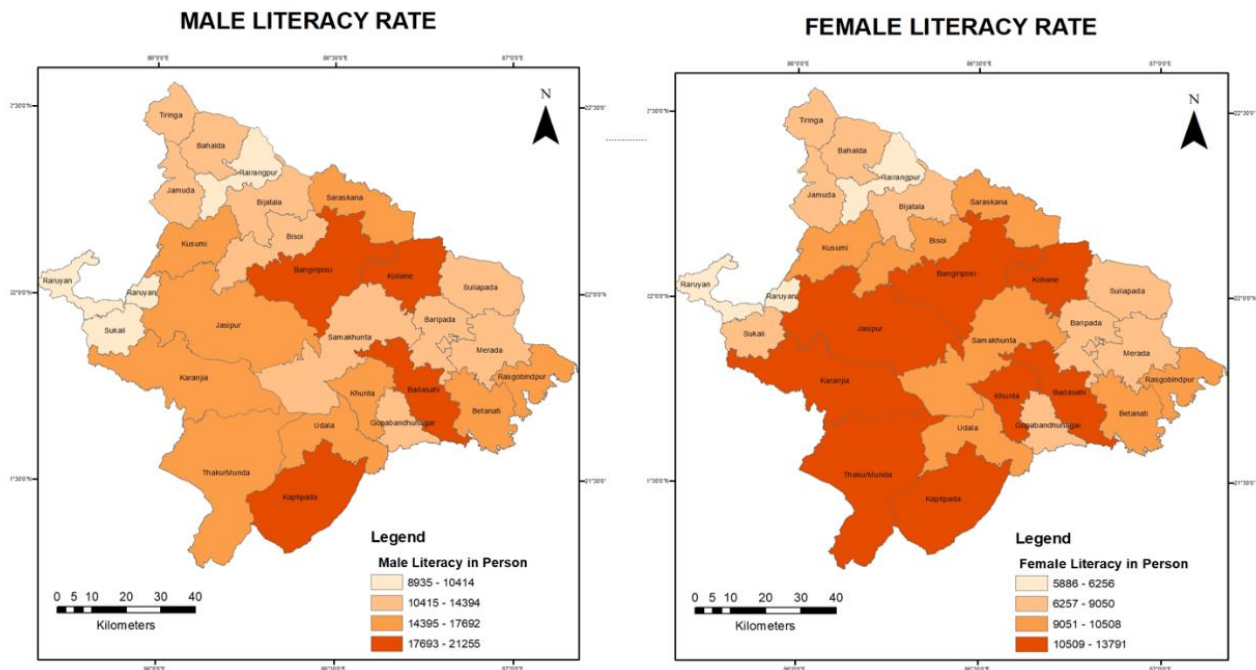


The literacy rate of Odisha in 2011 is 73.45% whereas the literacy rate of the tribe in Odisha is 52.2% which shows a disparity of 21.25 % between all the social groups and tribal groups. This indicates the tribal community of Odisha crawls in educational status.

**TABLE IV: LITERACY RATE OF TOTAL POPULATION AND ST POPULATION IN MAYURBHANJ**  
\*source: census of India-2011

Census year	Percentage of literacy		
	Total literacy rate in Mayurbhanj	Tribal literacy rate in Mayurbhanj	Tribal disparity
1961	14.18	7.10	7.08
1971	18.05	9.63	8.42
1981	25.71	14.50	11.21
1991	37.88	24.10	13.78
2001	51.91	38.80	13.11
2011	63.17	53.1	10.07

In Mayurbhanj the scenario of literacy rate is quite impressive in the tribal community which is seen in the year 2001 to 2011,(Table IV) but the disparity between other social groups and the tribal group is still maintained which creates obstacles to overcoming the disparity in social as well as economic status of the nation.



**Fig. 3: Block wise literacy rate**

As per the data from the 2011 census the block-wise literacy rate (fig. 3) shows that female literacy is lagging behind. There was a high educational disparity between male and female in Kaptipada, Badashi and Bangiriposi Block. But the literacy of tribal women is a major problem in Mayurbhanj.

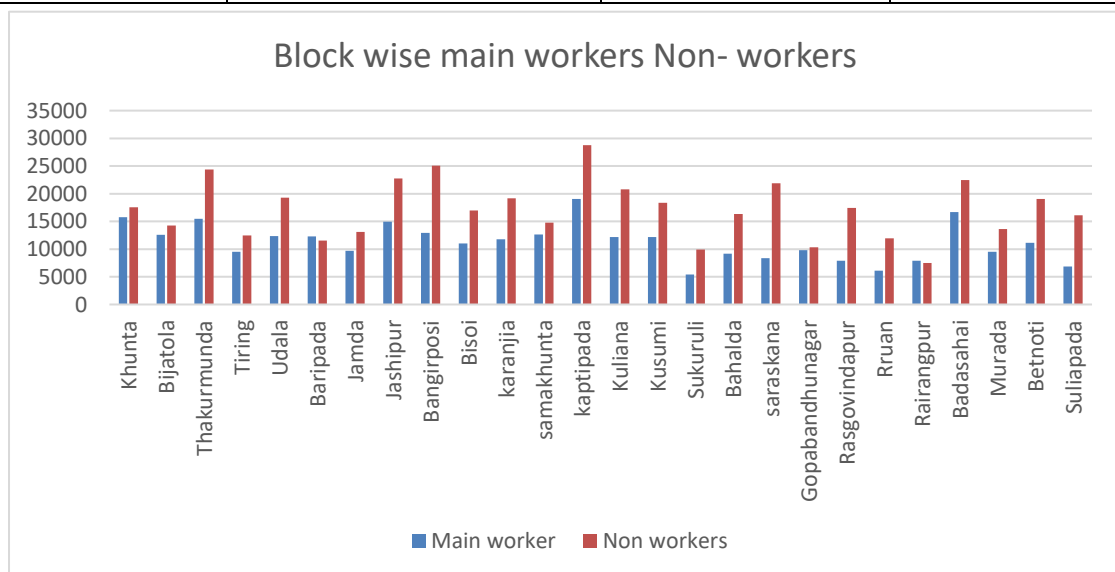
### VIII. ECONOMY OF MAYURBHANJ

Though the cost of living is very low in tribal areas but it is essential to analyze the socio economic development of any communities. The tribes of Mayurbhanj mainly depend upon cultivation, collecting minor forest products, work as agricultural labourers and industrial labourers for their livelihood. Santhal and Bhumji which is the largest tribal dwelling in Mayurbhanj depend on agricultural activities whereas Mankirdia, Kharria and Lodha consider as criminal tribes and haunting is their most significant occupation.

**TABLE V: BLOCK WISE TOTAL TRIBAL POPULATION, MAIN WORKERS, MARGINAL WORKERS AND NON-WORKERS**

\*source: census of India-2011

Block	Total ST population in Person	Main worker in person	Non workers in person
Khunta	58608	15774	17525
Bijatola	48627	12555	14242
Thakurmunda	78442	15472	24344
Tiring	42559	9510	12441
Udala	56642	12339	19290
Baripada	51716	12321	11542
Jamda	43639	9680	13078
Jashipur	70521	14956	22768
Bangirposi	72362	12929	25090
Bisoi	51723	11039	16950
Karanja	62110	11751	19171
Samakhunta	53306	12643	14756
Kaptipada	99053	19041	28742
Kuliana	67045	12155	20767
Kusumi	59758	12189	18354
Sukuruli	38146	5424	9924
Bahalda	49974	9179	16319
Saraskana	58337	8379	21878
Gopabandhunagar	41712	9836	10315
Rasgovindapur	52715	7873	17410
Rruan	35670	6137	11971
Rairangpur	32402	7911	7522
Badasahai	74120	16669	22440
Murada	45695	9508	13651
Betnoti	61880	11150	19052
Suliapada	41429	6834	16116

**Fig. 4: Block wise main worker and non-worker**

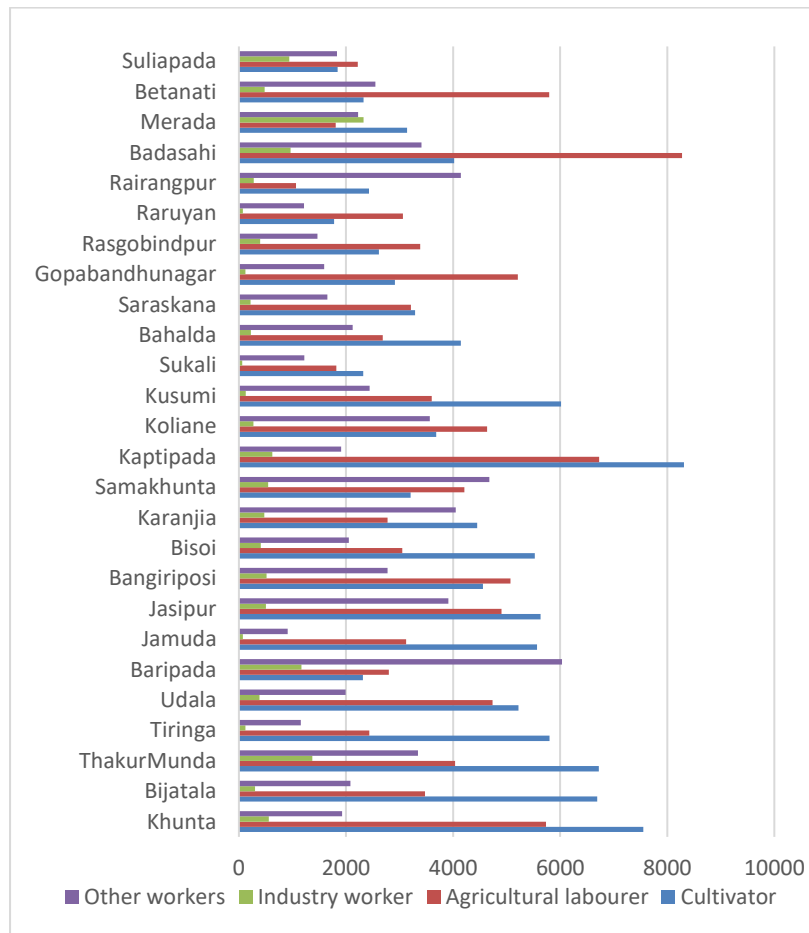


Fig. 5: Block wise Main work force participation in different economic activities

The total population of the tribes in Mayurbhanj engaged themselves in cultivation, agricultural labourers, Industrial labourers and other workers throughout the year. The dominant economic activity in this region among the tribe is agriculture. Tribes in Khunt , Kaptipada depend on cultivation and work as agricultural Laboure for their basic needs whereas more than 60 percent the tribes in Badashi block work as agricultural Laboure for surviving. Dependency ratio is high in Baripada where five persons depend on one person for their basic needs and lowest in Sulipapada Block where three person depend upon one person. Overall the dependency ratio of tribes in district is not high.

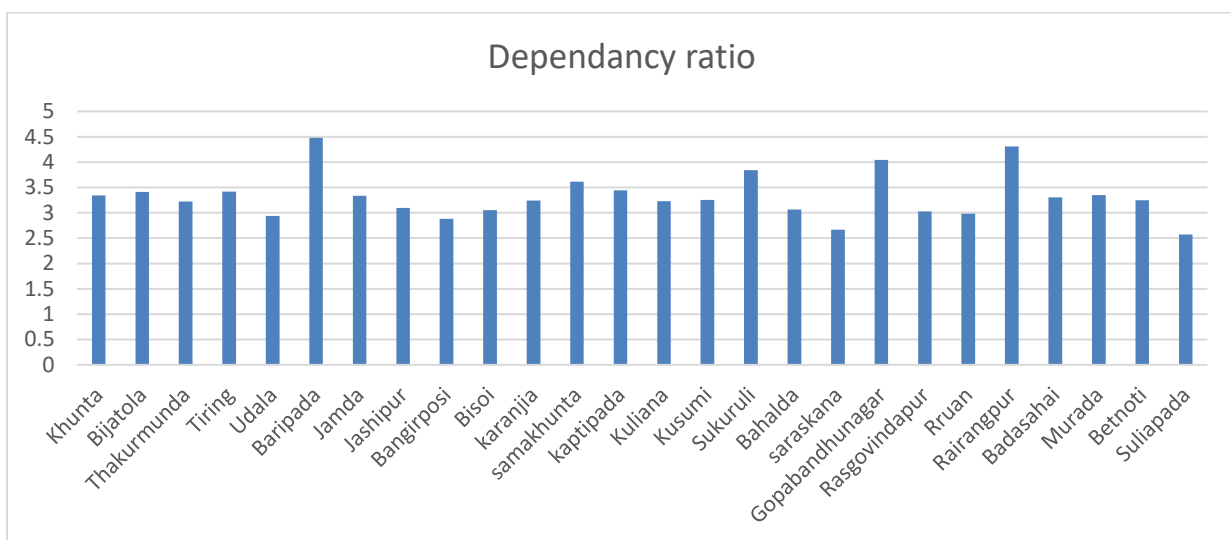


Fig. 6: Block wise dependency ratio

### IX. CULTURAL DIVERSITY OF TRIBES

The dynamism and rich cultural tradition of the tribes in Mayurbhanj make them unique and memorable in the world scenario. They consider nature as their supreme power and worships trees. They believed their God as Marang muru and worship them in an isolated area in middle of the forest surrounded by sal trees called as Jahira. There are a number of festivals celebrated by tribes like Karam parab, Baha Parab, Makara Sankranti, Hingula Yatra, Chhau Basuli puja, Tusu festival etc.

Makara Sankranti is an agriculturally based festival in which Makar chula was prepared, and offered to the sun. Tribe's worship Karam trees in Karam parab to celebrate brotherhood among them. In most of the festivals they clean their homes and coloured it with red soil and wear their traditional cloths, gathered in Jahira and Hnadia their regional liquor is freely consumed by men and women, enjoy with dance, song and music. Rice and meat are their basic food as nutrition intake and they prefer weekly market for their marketing of basic needs. Still more than 50 percent of tribe believe in Black magic, Sacrifice of animals, witch haunting etc.

### X. CONCLUSION

Fortified with diverse natural resources, Mayurbhanj, momentarily, is one of the largest districts of Odisha. Tribes are most innocent section of our society believe in simple lifestyle. But it is important to implemented all the policies and programs made by them in root level for their development to make them part of mainstem. They should be aware about the existing facilities and schemes provided by government so that they can utilized it for their development.

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