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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### WHY DURUAS ARE TRIBES?

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#### Abstract

The Durua tribes are leading a life like that of other primitive tribes Koya, Didayi, Bonda and others but unfortunately they have not been included in the Government of India's list of SC/ST or Primitive Tribal Groups. Their major plight is that they are not getting any government facilities due to their non-inclusion in the list of Scheduled Tribes. They have the major problem of their tribal identity. Despite having a legacy of rich cultural heritages even after the impact of modernity and globalization the Duruas are striving for their tribal hood status. The lack of support from the Government as well as awareness among them their traditional culture is on the verge of extinction. The modern legislation on forest also adversely impacts on their livelihood. They have lost their bamboo craft and forest based income due to forest rules. With the loss of their traditional livelihood their settled life has come under stress and strain and also responsible for gradual decline of their rich cultural heritages. Despite having all the features of tribal society, they have not yet included in the schedule list of government of India.

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#### Introduction:-

The name of durua going high with all over India with the award of Pallavi Durua crowned as India's first tribal queen. Over more than last five decades these durua tribes are struggling for their tribal identity. The Duruas are one of the primitive communities having all the features of tribal society. They are mainly found in Odisha, Andhra (known as SC community) and in Chattisgarh state (known as ST) of India. In Odisha mainly they are found in Malkangiri, Koraput, Nabarangpur and Rayagada district. According to Census 2011, there are total 18,151 Durua population lives in Odisha. Among them 8,402 lives in Koraput, 578 in Nabarangpur, 40 in Rayagada and 8,128 in Malkangiri District and about 1003 of them scattered in different parts of Odisha.

Since more than last sixty years attempts have been taken several occasions but Duruas have not listed in the Scheduled Tribe list of the Government of India. Duruas possess all the characteristics of a primitive tribe i.e. small population, isolation from other tribals & non-tribals, distinctive appearance, language, culture, traditions, practices, customs, costumes, food habits, festivals, dance, music, songs very low literacy, primitive technology in agriculture, primitive economy, etc. Their primitiveness & backwardness are reflected in their very life style.

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Yet, Duruas are not recognized as tribals & excluded from all tribal welfare schemes and face myriads of difficulties & hardship. Only in 2003 Durua was declared as ST & later deleted from the Schedule. They have been trying to obtain tribal status since last 60 years but in vain. Not even a single Durua has completed graduation. The modern developments in the various aspects of social life have no impact on their life style. Now these days also they do not wear shoes in the villages. Only school going children somehow started wearing shoes. Durua women wear a single saree, about 10-feet long, with half-covered knees & no second clothing.

### **Materials and Methods:-**

This study is based on both primary and secondary sources of data collection. A systematic field observation method is used to know the durua social structure and their living condition. The scholars working in this field were interviewed and related information was collected for the better analysis.

### **A Sociological Inquiry about the Duruas**

The sociological understanding about the habitat amidst forest, housing pattern, domestic animals and birds, food, clothing, song dance and music, musical instruments, their costumes, traditional social institutions like dormitories for both boys and girls, traditions, customs, norms and values, their religion, deities, fairs and festivals, agricultural practices resemblance with other scheduled tribes of Koraput region.

The community has almost all the characteristics of a Primitive Tribal Group: small population, homogeneity, distinct and ethnic identity, backwardness, primitive technology in agriculture, substantial dependence on forest collections and very low literacy. [1] The Durua tribes are leading a life of other like primitive tribes Koya, Didayi, Bonda and others but unfortunately they have not been included in the list of SC/ST or Primitive Tribal Groups. Their major plight is that they are not getting any government facilities due to their non-inclusion in the list of Scheduled Tribes. They have the major problem of their tribal identity. Despite having a legacy of rich cultural heritages due to impact of modernity and lack of support from the Government their traditional culture are on the verge of extinction. The modern legislation on forest also adversely impacts on their livelihood. They have lost their bamboo craft and forest based income due to forest rules. With the loss of their traditional livelihood their settled life has come under stress and strain and also responsible for gradual decline of their rich cultural heritages.

### **Durua Habitation**

Undivided Koraput, the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest district in India, has Durua habitations / villages on the delta of the river Saberi & other rivers. They have constructed their habitat / villages on both banks of rivers, rivulets, streams, etc. & have settled there since time immemorial. Forest & rivers are their eternal companions. They enjoy taking bath, fishing, cleaning their clothes & animals in the free-flowing water of the rivers.

Forest is their life & livelihood and they preserve the forest. Duruas feel that our forest is alright means we are alright. They utilize various forest products to construct their houses, agricultural implements, musical instruments. [2]

### **Durua Housing Pattern**

Durua family lives in a cluster of single / two room houses. To protect their cluster houses they construct boundaries made of bamboo matting or thick wooden planks. Mud led walls & mud floor of their small hay-thatched house, well-decorated with white, red & black soil are their shelter & companion.

Houses are constructed apart from each other. They are roomy, airy & well-lit and complete privacy is maintained.

### **Domestic animals and Birds:**

Duruas rear milch-cows, plough-bullocks and goat, sheep, pigs, fowl & duck for meat. Surplus animals & birds are sold for money. Dog, cat, parrot, maina etc. are pets.

### **Durua Marriage and Family**

The Durua family is just like the family pattern of other tribal groups of Koraput. They love to live in a community life. Their family size is small and after marriage generally children do not reside longer period with their parents. Traditional Durua young man and women enter into marital relation under the training they receive in their dormitories. Most of their marriages are based on mutual understanding and marriage through elopement. There are very rare examples of arrange marriage but any form of marriage require parental consent and Durua priest performs

the marriage. Duruas are far away from the social practices of modern society and they managed to keep themselves safe distance from dowry, rape murder, and female infanticide. The Durua marriages are solemnized in various ways - arranged, love-cum-arranged, elopement, widow remarriage, widower remarriage etc. Polygamy is present but with the contact of mainstream society gradually it is declining.

#### **Durua Food Habits**

Duruas are voracious eaters & eat fish, edible insects, flesh of all animals & birds except poisonous snakes. Their primary food is raggi-gruel and gruel of rice, flour of sorghum & finger millet.

#### **Durua Entertainment:**

Song, Dance & Music coexist with Durua culture, perhaps since the arrival of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Durua. Durua tribe is unthinkable without these. They are born dancers, singers & musicians. Their songs are self-composed with incoherent lyrics but situation-specific meaning. Traditional beverage called *Landa*, *Pendam*, *Salap* added to the matchless dance & music make their days, evenings & nights small & heavenly dreamy. [3]

#### **What Makes Duruas to Lose their Tribal Status**

In its efforts, the State Government of Odisha has failed to bring over 18,000 Durua Tribes since more than last six decades. The Durua tribe in Odisha is not recognised because of a mistake in the Centre's list of Scheduled Tribes made in 1951. The list mentioned Dharua tribe as existing in Koraput and Mayurbhanj district of Odisha. But in reality, Dharua exists only in Mayurbhanj, while the tribes living in Koraput are known as Durua. It seems the Durua Tribe lost to spelling.

#### **Scholars Working on Durua**

In this contemporary period, there are some scholars and social activist namely, Paresh Rath, Sadananda Odari, Pratima Rath, and Prafulla Padhy are well known for their contribution in bringing the issues of Durua socio-cultural and religious practices in to the lime light. The durua is a community of marginal farmers and forest collectors living in Koraput and Malkangiri district of Orissa and in the neighbouring Chhatisgarh state. In Koraput they are found in Kotpad, Kundra and Boipariguda Blocks and in Mathili Block of Malkangiri. In Chattisgarh their concentration is in Bastar district.

#### **Conclusion:-**

The Durua tribe in Odisha was not recognised because of a mistake made in the Government of India's Scheduled tribe list prepared in the year 2001. Due to non recognition duruas are deprived of government plans and programmes and welfare schemes, lost their large part of land, and resources.

#### **Recommendations**

The inclusion of a community as a Scheduled Tribe is an ongoing process and several initiatives may be taken to include Duruas in the list of Scheduled Tribes.

1. The Durua Tribe need to regain their Tribal status with help of Community Leaders, Social Activist, Govt. functionary, Political Leaders, electronic and print media, institutions and organization which are working for the Tribal Empowerment and Civil Society Groups. In this regard the Anthropological Survey of India, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, COATS, Koraput, CTWCD, Central University of Orissa may take initiatives.
2. An extensive Survey of Durua Tribe is required to know the features of their society. If the features of Durua Tribes resemblances with the features of Scheduled Tribe as mentioned in the Indian Constitution.
3. The issue required wide spread publicity in form of books, articles in journals, and periodicals, reports, exhibitions and demonstration their society and culture and generate public opinion regarding inclusion of Durua in Scheduled Tribe List.
4. Under the Article 342, the Parliament is empowered to enact law in this context to include or exclude any tribe or tribal community or in respect of such groups.

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