

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC STATUS OF JUANG TRIBE: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY IN KEONJHAR DISTRICT OF ODISHA

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Abstract:

The Juang Tribe of Keonjhar District in Odisha, India, one of the PVTGs, presents a rich tapestry of cultural heritage and traditional practices that have endured through generations. This anthropological study delves into the demographic status of the Juang Tribe in Keonjar District, aiming to shed light on their social organization, economic activities, health, education, and the challenges they face in a rapidly changing world. The Socio-Economic Status (SES) of the Juang People force them to work under the low-income jobs, resulting in poor purchasing power, hence the significant level of low quality of diet may be the factor for the prevalence of under nutrition and anemia among the Juangs of Odisha. By exploring the historical background, cultural nuances, and contemporary realities of the Juang Tribe, we seek to deepen our understanding of this indigenous community and its place within the broader context of anthropological research. (Keywords: Juang, PVTG, Demography, Gonasika, SES)

INTRODUCTION

The Juang Tribe is a vibrant indigenous community residing in the Keonjhar District of Odisha, India. Known for their rich cultural heritage and strong communal ties, the Juang people have a unique way of life that sets them apart from other tribes in the region. Studying the Juang Tribe is crucial for understanding the diversity of human societies and preserving the cultural legacy of indigenous communities. By delving into their customs, traditions, and demographic makeup, researchers can shed light on the challenges faced by the Juang people and work towards promoting their well-being. The Juang Tribe has a rich tapestry of origin stories and migration patterns that have shaped their identity over the centuries. From tales of ancient ancestors to historical movements across the landscape, these narratives provide a glimpse into the tribal heritage of the Juang people (Patnaik, N. 1986). Studies on other tribes revealed that most of the people are working as daily wage laborers who do not avail good health facilities, live in unhygienic atmosphere and non-sanitary facilities. It also highlighted that all these factors aggregate to bring abnormal physiological profile among the tribal communities of Odisha, which is a major health concern. (Mohapatra, M. et.al. 2016)

Historical roots can be traced back to the Juang tribes. The Juang tribes assert that they can trace their lines of descent all the way back to the Gonasika hills on earth, which existed in ancient times. These hills are the source of the Baitarani River, which flows through Keonjhar and is located in close proximity to the neighbouring community of Honda. In light of the fact that they both originate from the same place, the etymological significance of the word Juang makes this point very clear. 'Patuas' is another name for Juang, which literally means 'leaf-wearers' in another language. The Juang tribes are also often referred to as patra-savaras, with the word "patra" standing for a leaf. This is the opinion of certain individuals (Elwin, V. 1948).

Based on the information provided by this source, it is thought that the Juang tribes belong to a particular subgroup of the Savara tribe. This subgroup is distinguished by the fact that its members are known to adorn themselves with individual leaves. A large nasal bridge, flattened facial features, ample oral cavities, expansive nostrils, and well-developed labial structures are some of the distinguishing characteristics of the Juang people. Their complexion is described as being reddish-brown. There is a linguistic group known as Munda that includes the languages that are spoken by these Juang tribes. Col. Dalten, a prominent scholar, is the one who gave the name Kolarian to their one-of-a-kind language of communication. The Juang tribes have adopted a significant amount of Oriya vocabulary as a result of the influence of persons who speak Oriya. In recent years, the Juang people have made significant progress in their ability to communicate in Oriya linguistically. (SCSTRTI, 2016)

The total population of Juang is 47095 (Male- 23093 and Female- 24002, 2011 census) with sex ratio 1039.36. About the location of the study will be carried out among the Juang tribe (a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group) residing in Harichandanpur and Banspal blocks of Keonjhar district of Odisha. (India Census, 2011). Historically, the tribe has followed a semi-nomadic lifestyle characterized by shifting cultivation and hunting-gathering practices. However, in recent years, factors such as modernization, urbanization, and government policies have influenced the tribe's traditional way of life and contributed to changes in their demographic patterns. Healthcare facilities and educational opportunities have been limited in the Juang tribe's traditional areas, leading to relatively low literacy rates and inadequate access to modern healthcare services. Fertility in this group was higher than previously reported for the Juang, although it was not traditionally as high as in other Indian tribal groups. There was a mortality disparity in the population, and it had worse mortality conditions than the national population of India at the time. The Juang also had reversed sexual mortality differentials, which are typical of South Asian populations (Dash, N.C, 1997)

Extensive poverty, sub-standard housing, poor hygienic habits and an unhealthy climate are the reasons for the wide spread prevalence of diseases among the Juang. The Juang diet at present days has been affected adversely by various factors such as shortage of food due to repeated clearings of the forest, inadequate forest collection and the disappearance of wild life in the area. (Tribes of Odisha, SCSTRTI, 2004). The prevalence of the overweight category among the adult population of Juang tribe of Odisha is higher in the female population due to the overall difference in BMI between male and female participants. According to earlier research, certain lifestyle factors, such as reduced leisure time, increased physical demands in the workplace, occupational shifts, and limited lifestyles, are also linked to environments that are associated with a higher risk of underweight in India's rural areas (Mohapatra, M. et.al. 2022). A computer projection analysis showed a population that was increasing gradually, whereas some Indian tribal tribes were in danger of going extinct. Traditional beliefs and practices form the cornerstone of Juang culture, influencing their rituals, daily activities, and social interactions. Whether it's their reverence for nature or adherence to age-old customs, the Juang Tribe's cultural practices offer valuable insights into their way of life (Goswami, M. 2012).

Methodology

The current study, which focuses on the Juang tribe in the Banspal block of the Keonjhar district of Odisha, is descriptive, cross-sectional, and community-based. From the two Gram Panchayats, Gonasika and Kodipasa, eight distinct villages have been recognized. The data was gathered using a pre-structured schedule, case studies, participant and non-participatory observation, and in-person interviews with community members. Pre-structured schedules were completed using the interview method based on the participant's availability in order to collect information on socio-demographic

traits. Prior informed consent was sought for the collection of data, and institutional ethical clearance was secured for the research. SPSS and MS Excel have both been used to analyse the data.

Area and People

The northernmost region of Odisha, India, is home to the tribal people in Keonjhar district. There are thirteen blocks in Keonjhar, and the block with the highest percentage of ST residents is Banspal. The western portion of the district map shows the location of the examined region in the Keonjhar district of Odisha. The Banspal block has 164 communities with 102,527 residents, 80 percent of whom are ST. In the Keonjhar district, the two primary PVTGs are the Paudi Bhuiya and Juang. The Juang tribe has the largest concentration in the Keonjhar district, with 4,709,520 members overall. Two Grama Panchayats in the Banspal Block, Gonasika and Kodipasa, have been the sites of the fieldwork.

The term 'Juang' indicates man. Their primary sources of income are agriculture (shifting cultivation), hunting, gathering, domesticating animals, trading, exchange, wage labour, etc. The Juang people believe in the presence of supernatural and invisible powers that control and guide their lives and are found in the nearby hills, forests, rivers, and houses. They worship 'Gramasree', the chief deity of the hamlet and protector of the people from all misfortunes, including disease. It is represented by a stone or wooden post that is placed in the middle of the hamlet, among other rocks.

Demographic Profile of the Juang Tribe

Physical Features

The Juang cultural entity is one-of-a-kind, and it has long endured despite the numerous important changes that have happened in tribal life throughout the country and the state. Despite the fact that there is little residue Juang history, the Juangs continue to live with oral tales and traditions that strengthen their origins. The Juangs are of Proto-Australoid race. They are medium-sized, with a long head, high cheekbones, and a broad nose with a hollow at the root. Their hair is black, wavy, and coarse. The skin color ranges from brown to dark brown, and the face is oval shaped. The Juang people's physical characteristics include broad noses, flat features, huge mouths, wide nostrils, and thick lips. Their complexion is reddish brown.

Dialect of Juang Tribe

The Juang are related to the Kolarians by linguistic affinity, and they speak a language known as "Juang". The Juang tribes speak Munda languages. They have their own dialect, known as Kolarian by the renowned scholar Col. Dalton. As of the impact of many Oriya-speaking people, these Juang tribes have adopted several Oriya words. Newly, the tribes of Juang people have grown fluent in Oriya. According to Dalton, this language is more closely related to the Kharia language than to Kol dialects such as Ho, Mundari, and Santhali. Nevertheless, due to regular interaction with the Oriya and the existence of schools where Oriya is the main medium of teaching, the Juang are at risk of losing their language. In fact, the number of people who speak Juang has fallen significantly.

Dress and Ornament of Juang Tribe

Juang believed they were the world's first males, thus they dressed in leaves and wore beads as ornaments. However, people evolve throughout time. They now wear sarees, salwars, lungis, and dhotis, as well as modern clothing. Normally, economically affluent people practice or use the silver ornaments such as necklaces, earrings, nose pins, and anklets, whilst others prefer beads or other counterfeit jewellery. A few people wear gold-made ornaments. It was discovered that the people of some settlements were economically better off since they lived near the district center and hence had greater fashion sense than the people of interior groups.

The Juang Settlement

The Juang people reside in both small and large settlements. Typically, Juang communities are located on hilltops, slopes, or in valleys surrounded by hills and woods. The buildings are partially concealed by the protruding branches of mango and jackfruit trees. Any location with a significant number of these trees indicates the presence of a Juang hamlet or an abandoned village site. The villages known as the Juang villages in Keonjhar are situated at the base of the hills, offering the residents access to both flat paddy fields and 'podu land' (land for shifting cultivation). Settlements are strategically built in close proximity to streams or rivers to guarantee a reliable source of potable water for the residents.

Table-1. Age and Sex Composition and Sex ratio

Age group	Male N (%)	Female N (%)	Total N (%)	Sex Ratio
0-10	223 (11.42 %)	245 (12.54 %)	468 (23.96 %)	1098.65
11-20	249 (12.75 %)	254 (13.01 %)	503 (25.76 %)	1020.08
21-30	180 (9.22 %)	180 (9.22 %)	360 (18.43 %)	1000.00
31-40	120 (6.14 %)	113 (5.79 %)	233 (11.93 %)	941.67
41-50	86 (4.4 %)	81 (4.15 %)	167 (8.55 %)	941.86
51-60	57 (2.92 %)	55 (2.82 %)	112 (5.73 %)	964.91
61-70	45 (2.3 %)	46 (2.36 %)	91 (4.66 %)	1022.22
70+	6 (0.31 %)	13 (0.67 %)	19 (0.97 %)	2166.67

Total	966 (49.46 %)	987 (50.54 %)	1953 (100 %)	1021.74
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From the above table, exploring the age and sex composition of the Juang Tribe reveals important insights into their social structure and dynamics. From the sex ratio it has been found that the number of female is quite high in comparison to the male in the studied area. From generational shifts to gender roles within the community, these demographic factors play a pivotal role in shaping Juang society.

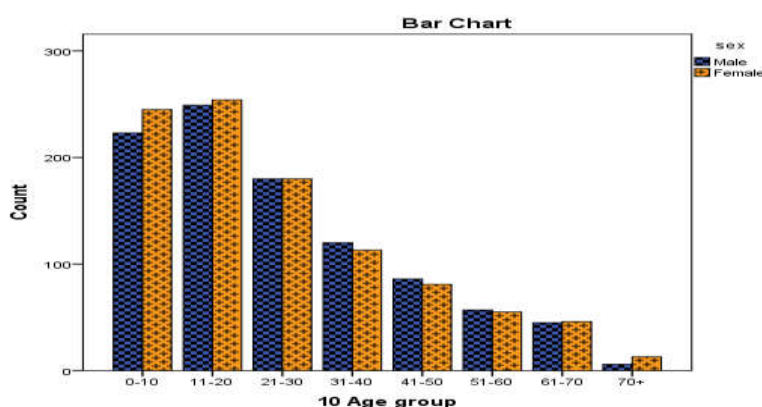


Fig-1. Age and Sex Composition

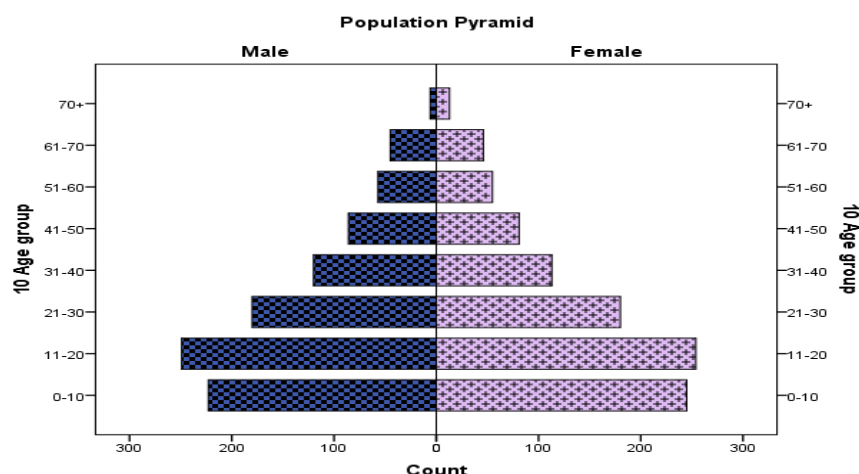


Fig.2 Population Pyramid of the Juang Tribe

The population displays the age distribution of the examined population, with male and female members separated down the middle. (Fig. 1&2) In the illustration, the eldest is at the top and the youngest is at the bottom. As the population grows, it adopted the shape of a pyramid.

Educational Attainment and Challenges

For centuries, the Juang Pirh has lacked communication infrastructure. As a consequence, individuals are living alone without access to sufficient healthcare and educational resources. Later on, the Juang Pirh area was officially recognized as an underdeveloped region. Ultimately, these tribal people experienced cultural stagnation, which hindered their ability to adapt to the swiftly evolving social, political, and economic environment throughout the post-independence period. Education is also required in the primary level.

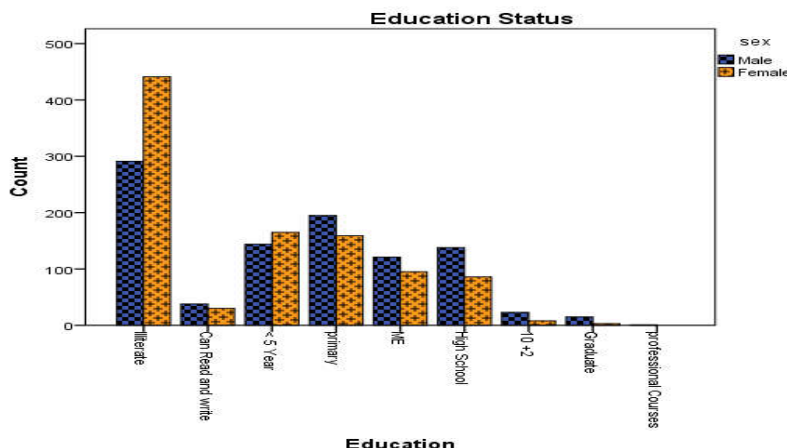
Table-2. Educational Status of the Studied Population

Education	Male N (%)	Female N (%)	Total N (%)
Illiterate	291 (14.9 %)	441 (22.58 %)	732 (37.48 %)
Can read and write	38 (1.95 %)	30 (1.54 %)	68 (3.48 %)
< 5 Year / Anganawadi	144 (7.37 %)	165 (8.45 %)	309 (15.82 %)
Primary school	195 (9.98 %)	159 (8.14 %)	354 (18.13 %)
ME school	121 (6.2 %)	95 (4.86 %)	216 (11.06 %)
High School	138 (7.07 %)	86 (4.4 %)	224 (11.47 %)
10th, +2	23 (1.18 %)	8 (0.41 %)	31 (1.59 %)

Graduate	15 (0.77 %)	3 (0.15 %)	18 (0.92 %)
Professional Courses	1 (0.05 %)	0 (0 %)	1 (0.05 %)
Total	966 (49.46 %)	987 (50.54 %)	1953 (100 %)

The educational attainment levels among the Juang tribe are relatively low, with barriers such as lack of schools and trained teachers hindering access to quality education. The above table:2 and Fig-3. It shows that 37.48% of the studied population are illiterate. Challenges persist in enhancing educational opportunities for the tribe. It is also to provide mother tongue based

Fig.3: Educational Status of the Studied Population



Economic Activities and Livelihood Patterns

The Juang tribe of Keonjhar District predominantly rely on agriculture as their main source of livelihood. They cultivate crops such as rice, pulses, and vegetables to sustain their families.

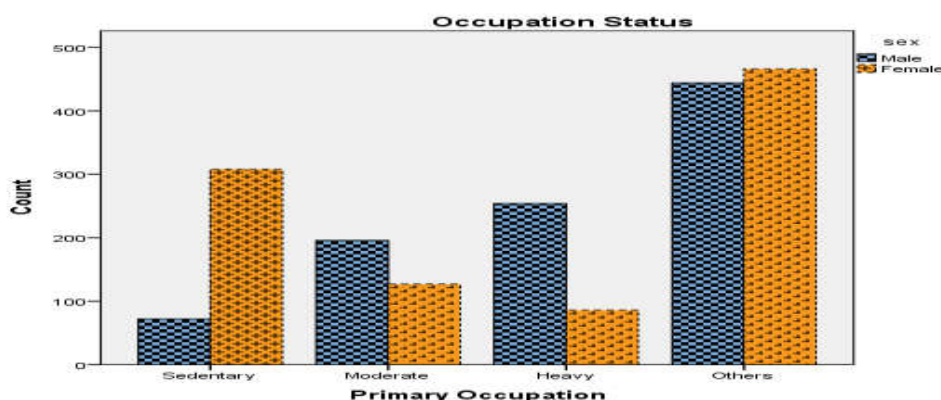
For decades, the Juangs have relied on their surrounding woodlands for a variety of needs, including food. Not long ago, their nutritional habits were solely dependent on forest harvest and shifting cultivation. In the nineteenth century, Dalton (1872) stated in his works that Juangs were not shifting cultivators and that chase (hunting) was their principal source of food.

The older Juang people claim that they witnessed shifting cultivation occasionally as children and that they were content to walk the jungle and harvest enough of nutritious roots, tubers, fruits, and leaves to feed themselves (Patnaik, 2005). Things have changed. Juangs regard shifting agriculture to be the centre pole around which their lives revolve. Nowadays, three cropping patterns are commonly observed in the Juang pirh. These are: 1. Kitchen Garden: The land surrounding the household is used to raise seasonal vegetables and fruits. 2. Unirrigated Land: These are highlands on steep slopes that are difficult to irrigate. In these areas, many crops are farmed, including maize and mustard. 3. Irrigated Land: The irrigated lowlands are located along the banks of hill streams. These lands are mostly used for rice, malate, and wheat agriculture.

Table-3: Occupational Status of the Studied Population

Occupation	Sedentary	Moderate	Heavy	Others	Total
Male N (%)	72 (3.69 %)	196 (10.04 %)	254 (13.01 %)	444 (22.73 %)	966 (49.46 %)
Female N (%)	308 (15.77 %)	127 (6.5 %)	86 (4.4 %)	466 (23.86 %)	987 (50.54 %)
Total N (%)	380 (19.46 %)	323 (16.54 %)	340 (17.41 %)	910 (46.59 %)	1953 (100 %)

Fig.4: Occupational Status of the Studied Population



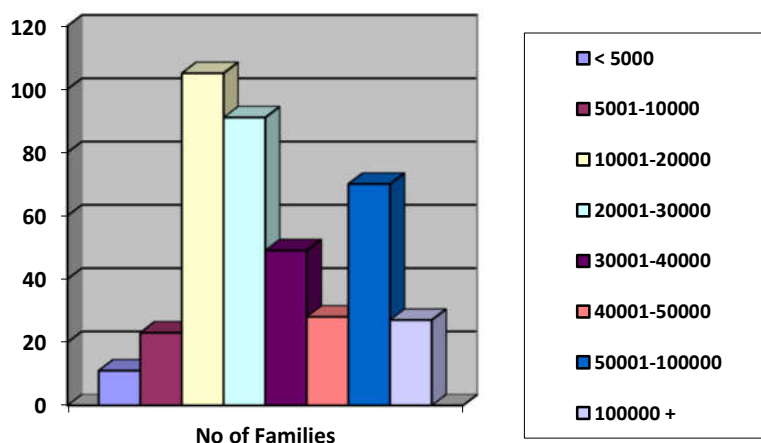
(* Sedentary Occupation: Shop Keeper, Petty Trade, Housewife, Pvt & Govt Service, Retire & Old Person, Moderate Occupation: Assist in HH activities, Cultivator, Craftsman, Artist & Weaver, Heavy Occupation: Agricultural Labour, Non-agricultural Labour, Permanent Attached Labour, Other: Children going to Anganawadi from 3-5 years, not going to school and working, going to school and not working, going to school and working, child less than 3 year, neither study nor working, unemployed, and others)

The above table-3 & fig.-4, it reveals different type of occupation of Juang community. It is observed that 19.46 percent people have sedentary occupation and 16.54 percent people have moderate type of occupation. The heavy occupation percentage is found 17.41 percent and the other different types of occupation are found 46.59 percent among Juang people.

Table-4: Family Income Status of the Studied Population

Income Category (Rs./ Annum)	No of Family N (%)
< 5000	11 (2.72 %)
5001-10000	23 (5.69 %)
10001-20000	105 (25.99 %)
20001-30000	91 (22.52 %)
30001-40000	49 (12.13 %)
40001-50000	28 (6.93 %)
50001-100000	70 (17.33 %)
100000 +	27 (6.68 %)
Total	404 (100 %)

Fig-5: Family Income Status of the Studied Population



The above table-4 & the figure-5, it shows that most of the families are in low income level in the studied population. More than 50% of the families are below an annual income of Rs. 40000/- per annum. The socio-economic conditions of the Juang People force them to work under the low income jobs, resulting in poor purchasing power, hence the significant level of low quality of diet may be the factor for the prevalence of under nutrition and anemia among the Juangs of Odisha.

Marriage Practices and Family Dynamics

In the Juang community often occur several years following puberty. The boys marry between the ages of 20 and 25, when they are able to provide for themselves. Otherwise, they cannot arrange for the bride's price. Bride pricing is the most important ritual in the Juang tribe. The females marry between the ages of 13 and 18 years. In every circumstance, the husband must be older than the wife.

Table-5: Marital Status of the Studied Population

Marital Status	Male N (%)	Female N (%)	Total N (%)
Unmarried	518 (26.52 %)	478 (24.48 %)	996 (51 %)
Married	413 (21.15 %)	423 (21.66 %)	836 (42.81 %)
Widow	35 (1.79 %)	83 (4.25 %)	118 (6.04 %)
Separated	0 (0 %)	3 (0.15 %)	3 (0.15 %)
Total	966 (49.46 %)	987 (50.54 %)	1953 (100 %)

The family is the tiniest social part among the Juang, and it is almost always nuclear. It consists of parents and unmarried children. Sometimes elderly parents who are unable to live alone end up living with one of their sons' families. The next higher unit is 'sept', also known as 'bak' in the Juang linguistic. The Juangs' social system appears to be difficult, as each village provides a separate list of 'septs', owing to their imitation of nearby Hindu castes. In fact, the Juang practices village exogamy rather than 'sept' exogamy. Out of this technique, two distinct sets have emerged: 'Kutumba village' or agnatic village and 'Bandhu village' or cognate village. Marriage cannot take place between people from 'Kutumba communities'. They can form marriage relationships with members of their 'Bandhu village'. The Juangs speak their own language, known as the 'Juang' language. The people of the Juang tribe recognize as Juang and do not marry outside of their community. The myths and tales strengthen their sense of self-identity by reinforcing their beliefs and values about their shared ancestor and the preservation of their cultural group.

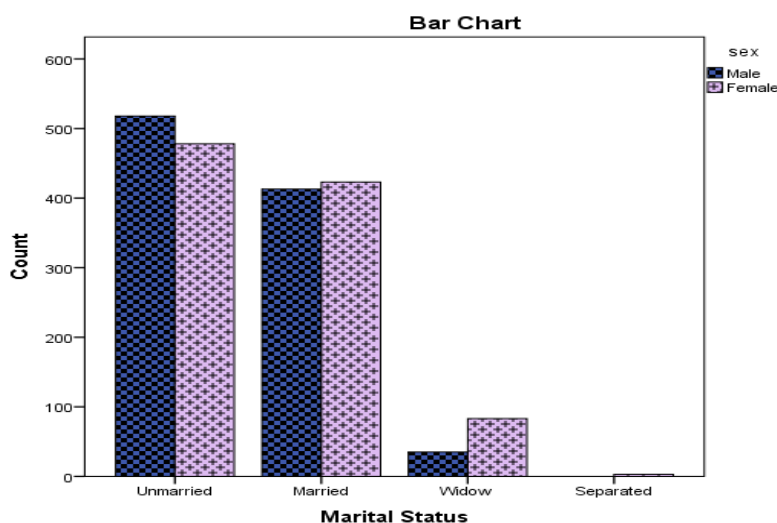


Fig.6: Marital Status of the Studied Population

Marriage practices and family dynamics offer a glimpse into the intimate aspects of Juang life, highlighting the roles of individuals within the household and the broader community. Understanding how marriages are solemnized and families are structured sheds light on the complex network of relationships that define Juang society.

The Juang Tribe's social organization is intricately tied to their clan structure and lineage system, which govern relationships and responsibilities within the community. By examining these kinship ties, researchers can unravel the intricate web of connections that bind the Juang people together.

Traditional Crafts and Economic Exchange

Juang men are well known for their capability to craft beautiful combs with intricate design with the horns of animals. The rings and anklets constitute the repertoire of the ornaments where art patterns of the Juangs are found carved. Juangs are a dance loving people. They wear rings, anklets and bangles to make the dance look beautiful and musical. In addition to agriculture, the Juang tribe also engages in traditional crafts such as pottery, basket weaving, and woodworking. These crafts play a significant role in their economic exchange within and outside the tribe.

Food habits and Drinks

The Juang regard rice to be the ultimate food. Even meat served without rice is not considered a nutritious supper. The plain Juang farm lowland paddy, which yields more paddy for household consumption. On the other hand, paddy agriculture in the highlands is vulnerable to heavy rainfall and the ravages of wild animals. A Juang has the least chance of harvesting a bountiful paddy crop from his stony toila land. As a result, unlike plain inhabitants, they grow a variety of crops such as beans, millets, and pulses, which are eaten instead of rice. Their food is further supplemented with fruits, roots, and tubers obtained from the jungle. On the highlands, an average Juang's paddy harvest can barely sustain him and his family for three to four months. The cash crops he grows, such as rasi and mustard, are traded for paddy.

Leisure and Recreation:

Leisure and recreation are important aspects of everyone's lives. The phrase "leisure" refers to being free of one's own business or taking a break from work. Because the tribal people spend the majority of their time working, they have few opportunities for recreation. Juang are constantly occupied with shifting agriculture (kamana) and collecting wood and fruits. Seasonally, they also work for daily salaries and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act of 2005 (MGNRGA). Some elderly individuals engage in gossip or discussions about the village's problems and disparities. Women are rarely observed gossiping with one another. Children and younger boys play a variety of games. Following that, they spend some time enjoying themselves. During the festival season, ladies do not work outside. Males also spend their spare time by gossiping, drinking handia (rice beer), and smoking bidi (leaf cigarettes) in Majang (community hall).

Majang has a crucial part in Juang society. It is also known as "Mandaghara" since it hosts traditional dances and used to host the village panchayat. It also serves as a guest house for all tourists to Juang village, with all food grains available. All religious and other auspicious works are also performed here. Majang is not open to women; only males are allowed to enter because it is a community and cultural hall designed specifically for men. It can also be used as a godown to store grains during harvesting.

Access to Healthcare Services

Access to healthcare services remains a challenge for the Juang tribe due to limited infrastructure and resources. Government hospitals have only lately introduced the Juang villages to the contemporary healthcare system. The villages of Gonasika, Phuljhar, Kolenda, and Sukati are home to four Primary Health Centers (PHCs), one District Headquarter Hospital, and one Community Health Center in the Banspal block. Efforts are being made to improve healthcare facilities in the region.

Challenges and Opportunities for the Juang Tribe

The Juang tribe faces environmental threats such as deforestation and loss of traditional lands, impacting their resource management practices. Sustainable solutions are needed to address these challenges.

Despite challenges, there are opportunities for socioeconomic development within the Juang tribe. Initiatives focusing on skill development, entrepreneurship, and sustainable livelihoods can empower the tribe and foster economic growth.

Conclusion and Implications for Anthropological Research

Through this anthropological study, key findings emphasize the importance of understanding the unique cultural and socioeconomic dynamics of the Juang tribe for effective development interventions. The low SES (Socio-Economic Status) of the Juang People force them to work under the low income jobs, resulting in poor purchasing power, hence the significant level of low quality of diet may be the factor for the prevalence of under nutrition and anemia among the Juangs of Odisha.

Future research should focus on exploring innovative strategies to address the challenges faced by the Juang tribe, promote cultural preservation, and enhance their quality of life. By continuing to study and support the Juang tribe, anthropologists can contribute to sustainable development and social justice in the region. In conclusion, the demographic study of the Juang Tribe offers valuable insights into the unique way of life, challenges, and resilience of this indigenous community. By recognizing and preserving the cultural heritage and addressing the pressing issues faced by the Juang Tribe, we can contribute to fostering sustainable development and preserving the diversity of human societies. This research underscores the importance of continued anthropological inquiry and advocacy for the well-being of marginalized groups like the Juang Tribe in Keonjhar District, Odisha.

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