

Social life and food habits pattern among *Adivasi* women of Kalahandi district, Orissa

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ABSTRACT

Adivasi tribes have traditionally depended on harvests of forest wildlife, forest products from shifting land for their food as well as for cultural definition and social connection due to modernization. The main objective of the study was to the study social life style pattern among *Adivasi* women living in Kalahandi region. A sample of 100 respondents were purposively selected from 4 blocks viz., Madanpur Rampur, Lanjigadh, Narla and Thuamul Rampur of Kalahandi district, Orissa. Questionnaire method was used for data collection and data analysis was done through frequency and percentage. The result revealed that most of the respondents celebrate different festivals and most of them wear ornaments made up of beads and other metals in festive occasion. A fair number of respondents consumed different liquor and peetha prepared by their own. This paper tries to document the various festivals, ornaments, peetha and liquor used as a social prestige for the *Adivasi* women in their community.

KEW WORDS : Harvest, Festivals, Modernization, Peetha, Social life, Food habits

How to cite this Article: Padhan, Sarojini and Mishra, Sunita (2011). Social life and food habits pattern among *Adivasi* women of Kalahandi district, Orissa, *Adv. Res. J. Soc. Sci.*, 2 (2) : 147-150.

Article chronicle : Received : 30.04.2011; **Sent for revision :** 13.07.2011; **Accepted :** 15.10.2011

INTRODUCTION

The term *Adivasi* is a Hindi word that comes from Sanskrit language. It is a combination of two words, *Adi* - which means first or the early, and *vasi* - meaning dwellers or settlers or inhabitants. Together it means the first settlers, or early inhabitants or early dwellers. This term is commonly used for groups otherwise categorized as "scheduled tribes" in the constitution of India. However, the Hindi term is "*Anusuchit-Jana-Jati*". *Anusuchit* meaning scheduled, *Jana* means people and *Jati*, race or races, initially termed as *Ban Jati*, meaning forest races. Interestingly both of these terms used either in English or Hindi earlier and later as well do not have the same meaning as *Adivasi* (Mundu, 2006).

In Orissa there are 62 tribal communities with 112 sub-tribes/ sections recognized by Government of India. Each tribal community has distinctive characteristic features reflected in their social, economic, political and religious systems. Each possesses its own unique culture which differentiates one from the other. For instance, in economic considerations, all tribal groups do not enjoy the same status. They earn their livelihood through settled

cultivation, shifting cultivation, collection of minor forest produce, food gathering, hunting, fishing, manufacture of handicrafts and art objects, labour in agricultural as well as non-agricultural sectors, service in government and non-government organizations, petty business, skilled, semi skilled and unskilled labour, etc. therefore, their economic condition is not uniform. Generally, speaking, their economy is mostly subsistence-oriented. Some communities have better economic status whereas others are backward and still others are very backward (Mohanty, 2007). They live mostly in relatively isolated and inaccessible tracts which are eco-inhospitable. They usually in habitat in the areas full of mountains, hills, forests, terrains and undulating plateaus. They have their own ethos, ideologies, world view, value orientations etc. which guide them for sustenance amidst challenging situations and various oddities (Mishra, 2007).

The tribal people of Orissa observe a string of festivals. Some are closed affairs, relating to a birth or death within the family or a daughter attaining puberty. Others relate to sowing or harvest time and involve the entire community. Mostly a festival is an occasion for good

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