

DEMOGRAPHIC INFLUENCE OF THE MUNDA TRIBE IN NORTHEAST INDIA: A SOCIOECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PROFILE IN TRIPURA

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Abstract

This research paper aims to investigate the demographic influence of the Munda tribe in Northeast India, with a focus on their socioeconomic and political profile in Tripura. The Mundas have been an integral part of Tripura's economy for over a century, mainly working in tea gardens and settling in north Tripura. However, no significant work has studied the social, economic, and political existence of the Mundas in Tripura, nor is there a socioeconomic and political profile of the Mundas in Tripura. This research attempts to fill this gap by analyzing the shifting socioeconomic and political status of the Mundas in Tripura. The study will use both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze the data collected from primary and secondary sources. The research findings will reveal the history and present of the Munda community in Tripura and will be valuable for people who deal with social issues and the government to help the Munda community.

INTRODUCTION

The Munda tribe is one of the indigenous tribes in Northeast India, with a significant population in Tripura. The Mundas have been an essential part of Tripura's economy for over a century, mainly working in tea gardens and settling in north Tripura. Despite their significant contribution to the state's economy, no significant work has studied the social, economic, and political existence of the Mundas in Tripura. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the demographic influence of the Munda tribe in Northeast India, with a focus on their socioeconomic and political profile in Tripura. The paper will analyze the shifting socioeconomic and political status of the Mundas in Tripura by using both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze the data collected from primary and secondary sources. The study's findings will reveal the history and present of the Munda community in Tripura and provide valuable insights for people dealing with social issues and the government to help the Munda community. The Munda tribe's history and present in Tripura will be discussed in the literature review section of this paper. The literature review will also provide an overview of the existing research on the Munda tribe and their socioeconomic and political status in Northeast India. The paper will then present the research methodology, including the research design, data collection, and analysis procedures. Finally, the research findings will be discussed in detail, and the paper will conclude with the implications and recommendations for policymakers and people who deal with social issues.

In a study by Saha and Chakrabarti (2019), they analyzed the socio-economic and cultural life of the Munda tribe in Tripura, focusing on their agricultural practices and economic activities. However, there is no significant work that has studied the political existence of the Mundas in Tripura. Therefore, this research attempts to fill this gap and provide a comprehensive understanding of the socioeconomic and political status of the Munda tribe in Tripura.

Migration and movement

The Munda people migrated to Assam, West Bengal, East Bengal, and Tripura to create tea estates. British planters began Assam's tea garden in 1839. (Bhattacharyya, 2012). Similar initiatives in Assam followed 1839's success. 1854: Dharjeeling's first tea garden opens. Northern Bengal tried again in 1854. Duars began growing tea in 1874. 2 This research focuses on a tiny portion of the Munda people in Tripura from 1916. This percentage immigrated during and after WWI to build tea gardens. Many Munda people migrated from Assam and Sylhet to Tripura (Oraon, 2002).

Research Methodology

This research will use phenomenological and hermeneutical methods. Empirical research requires visiting their localities. Personal survey of all Munda settlements in Tripura. Participation, observation, interview, questionnaire, and casual conversation are used. Checking, comparing, and verifying will enrich the survey. Every phase will include standard tasks and census reports. We won't ignore obscure evidence. To follow the changeover route, even outdated rites and rituals, an interpreter, and solecism will be considered. Consider any convulsive crisis. Notes and references, bibliography, illustration, and documentation will be kept.

Research Design

This study's overview uses historical, empirical, statistical, and other methodologies. It's historical, empirical, and interpretive.

Study area

This research chose Tripura. 55 tea gardens exist in Tripura. Nearly all tea gardens have local Mundas. Mundas are found in significant numbers in tea estates like Ranibari, Pearacherra, Maheshpur, and Durga bari. I've toured these tea gardens. Tripura's 55 tea estates couldn't all be visited. So attempts have been undertaken to learn about the Munda people's history and culture.

Sampling Design

This research surveyed 300 Munda people. Different age groups are represented. They were randomly picked from my study region.

Results

Tripura's Munda experience continuity and change. Tripura's indigenous culture is no longer antiquated. Munda culture is complexifying. But not everyone has changed. Since 1947, many causes have accelerated transformation.

Environmental Changes: Before 1947, Tripura was steep and plain. Tripura was larger. The state's size has been cut in half to 10491.69 sq km. The current territory is like Jamaica. Indian Union's landlocked province between Assam and Bangladesh. Tripura's terrain varies.

Tripura's agriculture, communication, education, health, and sanitation were medieval until the 19th century. In 1872, two schools, two clinics, and one post office opened. Their number has doubled in a century. Nearly every community has a school, dispensary, post office, police station, bank market, and rations store. Hundreds of cars have replaced elephants, horses, palanquins, and pontoons. Streams are used for agriculture, hydropower, and fishing. Tripura's centre is Agartala. Population growth causes such changes.

Demographic changes: Since the previous several centuries, Tripura's population has become diversified. Immigration over emigration, birth over death, and shrinking area are increasing population density.

The above table demonstrates fluctuating decadal change. In 1961, growth rates were strong. Bengali and tribal Hindus fled rioting and persecution in E.P. to Tripura. S.T. population is declining, yet their growth rate is above the national average.

Economic Changes: The Munda economy consists of food collecting, animal and bird husbandry, shifting farming, basketry, weaving, and some trading. Daily labourers, fisherman, rickshaw-pullers, white-collar workers, businessmen, contractors, vendors, masons, gardeners, grocers, etc. The Munda people in my study locations aren't aware of their traditional livelihood, according to field research. It's a big change for them. The graphic displays it.

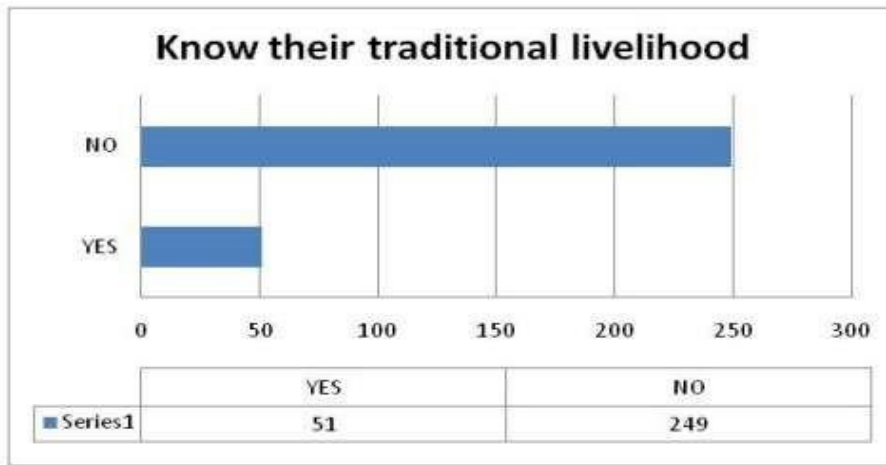


Figure 1: Traditional livelihood of the local Munda people

81% of the Munda people do not know their traditional livelihood, whereas 19% do. During the field survey, most Mundas said they don't want to work as tea garden labourers since current earnings can't meet their family's needs.

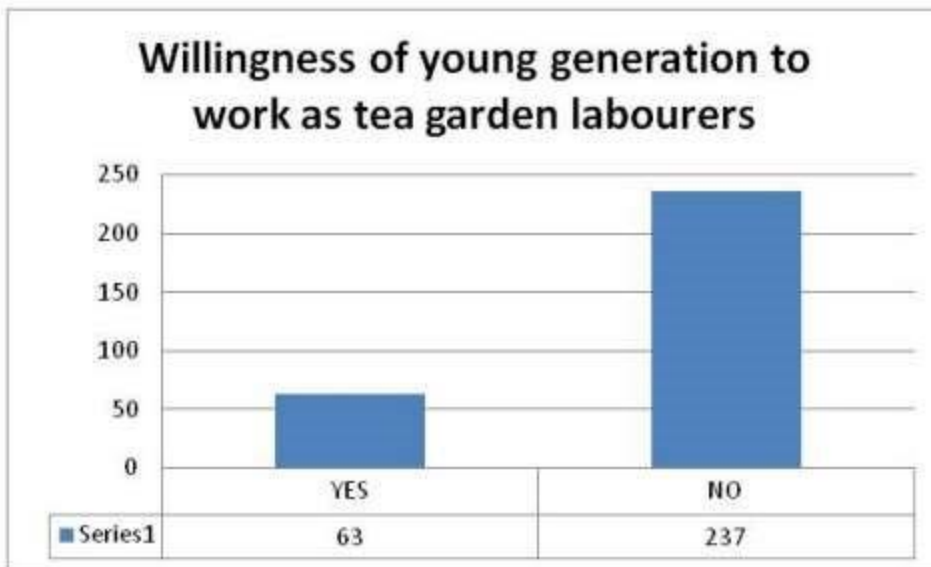


Figure 2: interested to work in the tea gardens as tea garden labourers

The accompanying bar diagram shows Mundas' refusal to labour in tea gardens. 79% are unwilling to work in tea gardens; 21% are eager. 79% of Mundas are already involved in everyday labour, rickshaw pulling, brick building and breaking, stone smashing, and MGNREGA.

Social Changes: Munda tribal life is undergoing multidimensional transformations. Small nuclear families are expanding, and hearth, home, and field are fragmenting. Parents with several daughters were complacent in antiquity.

Tripura's 1981 census found 5, 83,920 indigenous people. This number isn't isolated. 19 tribal communities. In field surveys, Munda kinds altered form. Few decades ago, families were joint, but as families grew, they became nuclear.

According to the chart, 72.34 percent of Munda live in nuclear families and 27.66 percent in mixed families. Because family sizes are growing, family types are changing to accommodate additional members.

57% of the study area's water comes from tube wells. Munda people rely on wells, ponds, and rivers for drinking water.

Religious changes: Tripura's Mundas have religious beliefs and rituals, like many other cultures. The Munda tribe of Tripura's traditional religions include supernatural creatures, supernatural power, symbolic expression of sentiments, and ceremonial behaviour. With the fast growth of literacy (2. 28% in 1901; 73.66% in 2001) and health care (2 allopathic dispensaries in 1873; 604 allopathic, 33 ayurveda, and 45 homeopathic health facilities in 1999-2000), a beneficial transformation has happened; individuals have acquired control over the environment and sickness.

Political Changes: Munda political culture is becoming more complicated. Change symptoms include less focus on family, more centralized political authority, more secular ideology, more status-remaking, less oral tradition, and more written regulations.

From the table, 85.6% of Munda people don't know the black or white magician. Only 2% said few individuals use magic, while 12.4% of local Munda people don't know because they don't believe in it.

Conclusion

There are 19 notified scheduled tribes in the state. These tribes have their own culture and economy. The Mundas they're from Chotanagpur (Jharkhand). They're now found in Bihar, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Assam, and Tripura. They were transported from Sylhet, Bangladesh, around a century ago. During King Birendra Kishore Manikya's reign in 19162, the Mundas arrived to Tripura. Some still live traditionally, nevertheless. This work presents the Mundas' history, culture, economics, and government as methodically as possible, along with their shifting phase.

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