

## EXPLORING THE HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL ROOTS OF THE MANKIRDIAS

**Miss Raimani marndi**

Research Scholar

Fakir Mohan University,

Vyasa Vihar,

Balasore,

Odisha

**DECLARATION:** I AS AN AUTHOR OF THIS PAPER /ARTICLE, HERE BY DECLARE THAT THE PAPER SUBMITTED BY ME FOR PUBLICATION IN THE JOURNAL IS COMPLETELY MY OWN GENUINE PAPER. IF ANY ISSUE REGARDING COPYRIGHT/PATENT/OTHER REAL AUTHOR ARISES, THE PUBLISHER WILL NOT BE LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE. IF ANY OF SUCH MATTERS OCCUR PUBLISHER MAY REMOVE MY CONTENT FROM THE JOURNAL WEBSITE. FOR THE REASON OF CONTENT AMENDMENT /OR ANY TECHNICAL ISSUE WITH NO VISIBILITY ON WEBSITE /UPDATES, I HAVE RESUBMITTED THIS PAPER FOR THE PUBLICATION. FOR ANY PUBLICATION MATTERS OR ANY INFORMATION INTENTIONALLY HIDDEN BY ME OR OTHERWISE, I SHALL BE LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE. (COMPLETE DECLARATION OF THE AUTHOR AT THE LAST PAGE OF THIS PAPER/ARTICLE)

---

### Abstract

In light of the district's diverse cultural past, this research investigates the cultural legacy of the Mankirdias, an indigenous group from Mayurbhanj, Odisha. The vivid festivals of Makar Parva and Karama Parva, the well-known Chhau dance, and the customary Jhumar folk songs, all of which represent the region's rich cultural diversity, are what make Mayurbhanj so famous. The roots of the Mankirdias are traced via historical migrations and legendary legends, emphasizing their close kinship with the country. They established themselves in the hills and woods of Mayurbhanj, where they created a distinct cultural identity based on customs including religious rites, hunting, and collecting. Oral traditions have allowed the Mankirdias to preserve their cultural integrity in the face of colonial intrusions and external influences from nearby populations. Their history, social customs, and environmental practices depend on these traditions. This essay highlights the Mankirdia people's flexibility and tenacity in maintaining their cultural legacy, demonstrating how their varied customs and practices are an essential component of Mayurbhanj's larger cultural environment.

**Keywords:** Mayurbhanj, Cultural Heritage, Indigenous Tribes, Oral Traditions.

---

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Mayurbhanj is a district in Odisha, India, that is well-known for its dynamic cultural environment. Unique festivals, traditional dance forms, and folk music are some of the things that define this region's cultural landscape. The Mankirdias are a major tribal group that stands out among the area's varied indigenous populations. Their rich cultural history is profoundly connected with the historical and ecological backdrop of the region. The vibrant cultural milieu in which the Mankirdias have flourished is reflected in the district's well-known festivals, such as Makar Parva and Karama Parva, as well as the Chhau dance, which is famous all over the world, and the Jhumar folk songs, which are melodic.

The origins of the Mankirdias are hidden in mythical legends and historical chronicles that relate their migration and settlement in the Mayurbhanj region, which is known for its abundant resources and verdant landscapes. As a result of their adaptation to the region's different ecological zones, which led to the creation of a unique cultural identity centered in traditional behaviors like as hunting, gathering, and ceremonial rites, these tales and historical documents provide insight on their adaptability.

The Mankirdias have been successful in maintaining their cultural identity in spite of the fact that they have been subjected to challenges from surrounding populations, colonial influences, and industrialization. The endurance of their cultural legacy is shown by the fact that they are able to successfully change while still upholding their fundamental principles. The oral traditions that play a significant role in the transmission of ancestral knowledge and behaviors from one generation to the next are at the heart of this preservation.

When compared to other groups in Odisha, scheduled tribes are considered to be the most vulnerable and weakest of all the communities. An ideal condition for a tribe is one in which it is a self-contained entity that functions as a society in and of itself. Raygada, Nabrangpur, Mayurbhanj, Koraput, Malkangiri, and Sundargarh are the six districts of Odisha that have been proclaimed to be totally tribal districts. These districts are home to 62 different tribes, the majority

of which are concentrated in these six districts. Mayurbhanj, Odisha was home to a large number of individuals who belonged to many tribes. As a result of their dependence on forest resources for their means of subsistence, they consider the forest to be their mother. The only means of subsistence for these people are agricultural goods, a few resources from the forest, and the presence of wild animals. In this region, around 58 percent of the population is comprised of members of several tribes, including Santhal Mahali, Saunti, Bhumji, Bathundi, Munda, Gond, Kol, Mankirdia, Lodha, Baiga, Hill Kharia, and others. Among all of these regional tribes that are located in the Mayurbhanj District, the Kolhas and the Bhumji are the most well-known and widely distributed tribal groups. The Santhal and Bhumji groups are located in every block of the district, despite the fact that they are dispersed over the whole district. On the other hand, the Lodha, Mankirdia, and Kharia populations are concentrated in the steep areas of the Similipal, Morada, and suilapada blocks of the Baripada district. For the sake of ensuring their own life, they gather materials from the forest, such as nuts, flowers, and leaves from Sal trees. They rely heavily on hunting as a means of subsistence, since it provides them with both food and nourishment. These fruits, nuts, agricultural items, and meat are the primary sources of sustenance for them. In addition, they construct their homes out of bamboo and wood.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

**Maharana, R., & Nayak, J. K. (2017).** Analyze the educational situation of the Hill Kharia in the Jashipur block of the Mayurbhanj district. Investigate the causes of poor literacy and educational regression. Propose educational initiatives for the examined area's advancement. Both primary and secondary data are used in this work. The primary data was gathered through scheduled semi-structured interviews and group discussions with two selected Hill Kharia villages in the Jashipur Block area of the Mayurbhanj district, Odisha. The secondary data was gathered from the Census of India, Economic Survey of Odisha, Annual Reports of the Ministry of Tribal Welfare, Selected Educational Statistics, and Department of Education in India. Nonetheless, the Hill Kharia and Mankirdia Development Agency (HKMDA) have set up two educational complexes to provide free elementary through upper secondary education, despite the very low educational standing of the Hill Kharia. Due to their far living from the educational institution, they have a very sluggish

mental attitude toward learning and very low financial standing. Parents are not giving their children the right attention when it comes to their schooling. The majority of the kids went to the forest to gather forest products and raise goats in order to maintain their way of life.

**Mohanty, S., Thamminaina, A., & Kanungo, P. (2019).** performed throughout four PVTGs—Paudi Bhuiyan, Lodha, Hill Kharia, and Mankirdia—in the districts of Sundargarh and Mayurbhanj, Odisha, India. A list of the villages inhabited by these four tribes was developed in order to aid in the selection of communities for the districts. Four towns were randomly chosen for each tribe after the populous villages were removed. In order to achieve the study's aims, 80 girls—80 of whom were out-of-school girls and 20 of whom were PVTG kids in the age range of 6 to 14—were randomly selected. To determine the obstacles preventing people from participating in education, a mixed-method approach was used. First off, three distinct interview schedules were used to gather the key answers from the girls, their parents, and the school instructors over the course of five months, from August to December 2018. In the chosen villages, four focused group discussions (FGD) were conducted in order to further triangulate data. The suggested educational framework for the PVTG girls was created using the input that was so obtained. In order to list the case studies relevant to each area, a content analysis of all the audio-visual recordings made during the fieldwork was also conducted. Principal Results: According to the data, students in classes VI–VII drop out at a higher rate than those in lower classes. Other impediments include helping out around the home and on farms during harvest season, single-teacher schools, which are common in many of the district's outlying schools, and day schools with a preponderance of male instructors.

**Pattnaik, P. P., & Rao, Y. G. (2020).** A variety of developmental steps have been made by the State and Federal Governments to improve PVTGs. During the 11th Plan period, the Indian government introduced the innovative Conservation of Culture cum Development Plan (CCD Plan) to support the development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). In order to build a strategy for the overall development of the two PVTGs and their territories, a baseline survey among the two PVTGs (Hill-Kharia & Mankirdias) located in the villages of HKMDA, Jashipur Micro Project in Mayurbhanj district, Odisha, was conducted. The research used an

observational study design, which is an empirical, exploratory technique using a mixed method approach. The 18 inhabited villages in the Jashipur and Karanjia blocks of the Mayurbhanj district (also known as "Hill-Kharia" and "Mankirdias" PVTGs under HKMDA) were all included in the research. Door to door household data gathering covered each of the 653 PVTG homes in the aforementioned two blocks. For this aim, a total of 653 houses from 58 Mankirdia and 595 Hill-Kharia PVTGs were surveyed. A long-term action plan for the development of the Hill Kharia and Mankirdias and their areas will be prepared with the assistance of the baseline survey, which covered the demographics, literacy status, living conditions, land holding pattern, asset ownership, access to basic amenities, access to institutional facilities, enrollment in various government schemes, etc. of the two PVTG groups. It also identified the gaps in infrastructure, basic amenities, livelihood, and income generation. The baseline survey made clear that although the PVTGs' population growth rate is on the rise, it is still below the national average. It is advised that Micro Project take the lead in extending the PVTGs' life expectancy and live birth rate. Given that the working-age population makes up the largest proportion of the population (42.89%), opportunities to participate in various Income Generating Activities (IGA) and raise their quality of life may arise. The PVTGs should have access to adequate medical facilities, and every family should, if at all feasible, get health cards that include Yojna Biju Swastya Kalyan.

**Mall, A. (2020).** This review is based on a research conducted in the Jashipur and Karanjia blocks of the Mayurbhanj district of Odisha on the issues of survival and livelihood faced by the Mankadia and Hill-Kharia tribes (PVTGs), as well as the effects of social programs on their way of life. According to the report, these PVTGs have very little education beyond the elementary level and poor health, both of which increase their vulnerability. Basic infrastructure including banks, schools, hospitals, roads, energy, clean drinking water, communication, and transportation is lacking for these two indigenous communities. The majority of them live in a primitive stage of life, without access to a decent home, and rely mostly on labor from humans and forest products to survive. They spend extremely little on health and education. Additionally, their low economic and physical conditions are mostly caused by alcohol addiction. The Hill-Kharia and Mankadia

tribes did not get the intended outcomes from the tribal welfare programs, and as a consequence, many of them rank lowest on the human development index.

**Anuradha, K. (2020).** Evaluate the functioning of the Micro Project and the degree to which the interventions it has provided have improved the income level and other socioeconomic conditions of the Bonda Households. Determine the extent to which the Micro Project has been able to address the fundamental and important issues of the Bonda PVTG Households and the area in which they reside. The evaluation study's findings cover a number of topics, including the BDA's institutional capacity and effectiveness in carrying out its operations, the development of infrastructure and the state of basic facilities, the status of livelihood, raising household income levels through new initiatives, and the state of particular human development indicators. The main conclusions regarding the aforementioned indicators show that while the government has made efforts to provide infrastructure facilities in the micro project area, there are still a number of gaps that need to be filled in order to give the Bondas access to basic amenities like ICDS, electricity, safe drinking water, storage, and processing facilities, as well as facilities for accessibility, education, and health. Despite the evaluation study's conclusion that job opportunities have decreased and income levels have not increased significantly over time, leading to distress migration, it is important to note that several novel and creative livelihood initiatives have been planned or launched as part of Project Jeebika, which aims to manage the livelihoods of all the ST and PVTG Communities in their locality in a cluster model.

### **3. UNVEILING THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE MANKIRDIAS**

The people who reside in the Mayurbhanj District have developed a strong connection to their culture. Unquestionably, Mayurbhanj is one of the most notable locations on the map of Odisha due to the vivacity and abundance of the cultural legacy that this District has. The Mayurbhanj District is home to two festivals that are particularly well-known: Makar Parva and Karama Parva. Both of these festivals are celebrated with a great deal of pomp and display. The Mayurbhanj District is a vast and breathtaking representation of the splendor of nature. In the middle of the environment, a dance style that is both beautiful and virtuous came into being. This dance style is called as the Chhau dance. This kind of dancing has garnered acclaim and recognition all around



the globe. It is renowned for its splendor, vigor, and the marvelous art that it has. The famous traditional folk song known as Jhumar is intrinsically tied to the Mayurbhanj District via its intricate connections. The celebrations, weddings, and other social activities of the people, as well as their sufferings and pleasures, are all portrayed artistically in these songs.

### ❖ Car Festival of Baripada

Baripada is another place where Lord Jagannath is worshiped as Shri Shri Haribaldev Mahaprabhu, in addition to His devotion in Puri. There is a proverb that states that Maharaja Baidyanath Bhanj had traveled to Puri in order to have a religious experience with Lord Jagannath. Due to the fact that the king did not provide the gold coins that were requested, he was not granted a "Darsan." What follows is a further interpretation of the tale. During the time when the Maharaja traveled to Puri in a royal splendor accompanied by 'CHHATRO' and 'CHAMORO,' the Gajapati of Puri declined to provide permission since it was a demonstration of higher rank than the 'Thakur Raja of Puri'.



**Figure 1: Car Festival of Baripada**

At that time, the prevalent norm at the time was that devotees to Puri would come as simple people without displaying any kind of superiority over the Gajapati, who was considered to be the Chalanti Vishnu Designate. It was at the Athar Nala, on the outskirts of Puri, that the Maharaja went to do penance. He had a dream in which Lord Jagannath gave him the instruction to build a temple at

Baripada so that he could visit his devotees and comfort them. at order to show respect for the desires of Lord Jagannath, he arranged for the construction of the magnificent temple at Baripada. All of the rites that are conducted for Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, and Devi Suvadra are carried out here in Baripada, just as they are at Puri. The wonderful tribute that the Bhanja Rulers made to Lord Jagannath by constructing the prototype of the Jagannath temple at Puri is what people would remember most about them. Their royal support in the realm of building was unparalleled.

### ❖ **Chhau Dance of Mayurbhanj**

An expansive vision of the splendor of nature may be seen unfolding in the region of Mayurbhanj, which is situated against the backdrop of Rofty Similipal Forest and has breathtaking waterfalls, flowing rivers, enormous mountains, and lush green valleys. A dance style that is both beautiful and virtuous, known as the famed CHHAU DANCE, developed in the midst of its surroundings. The popularity of Mayurbhanj Chhau has spread beyond the confines of geography and has garnered admirers from all over the globe due to its stunning beauty, vibrant energy, and artistic brilliance. Despite the fact that Chhau is well-known not only in India but also all over the world, the origin of the name Chhau is still a mystery. It is claimed that the word "Chhau" originated from the word "Chhaya," which means "shadow." On the other hand, the Chhau dancers of Purulia wear masks when they are performing, and the name of the mask is "Chhau".



**Figure 2: Chhau Dance**



There is a possibility that the name of the Chhau Dance comes from the famous mask known as the Chhau. According to the opinions of certain Chhau scholars, the Chhau gained its name from the word "Chhaushree." There is little doubt that the term "chhau" originates from the word "CHHAUNI," which refers to the camp that was encamped at the time of the military action. People claim that chhau was done in order to provide entertainment for the Oriya soldiers who were present inside the camp, and that it has since expanded without any bounds.

### ❖ Jhumar Folk Dance

The use of Jhumar may be traced back to the 18th century, although it was not in an organized form at that time. After a long day of labor, the people of Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, and West Bengal would perform Jhumar songs and dance in order to combat boredom and monotony. This was done in order to energize them for more labor. In spite of the fact that they were traveling to far-off locations in search of employment, they were unable to stop singing Jhumar songs that were catchy, poetic, and colloquial. Gradually, a Nachuni group was established, which had between eight and 10 members, including one Rasika, who served as the group's leader, one Nachuni, and performers of other instruments, such as the flute, harmony, dhol, chad-chadi, maadal, mahuri, and so on.



**Figure 3: Jhumar Folk Dance**

The Raja (King), Maharaja (Emperor), and Zamindar (Land Lord) saw Jhumar in the 18th century, and they were so enchanted by the language, sweet tunes, and dance that they could not help but patronize it. This helped remove the financial constraint that Nachuni Groups were under, which

further paved the way for Jhumar to earn recognition in the upper level of society. Regarding Jhumar dance, there are two distinct styles of dances. NACHUNI is the name given to the dance that is done by a single woman, whereas PANTA DANCE is the name given to the dance that is performed by a group of people. The songs of Jhumar are based on tunes. The song, which is referred to as SWARA PRADHAN, is the primary component, and the rhythm is characteristic of its own. The lyrics mostly describe the love that Radha Krishna has for Krishna.

#### **4. ORIGINS AND ANCESTRAL LINEAGE OF THE MANKIRDIAS**

A rich history that is based in oral traditions and ancestral rituals may be found among the Mankirdias, an indigenous tribe that hails from Mayurbhanj in the state of Odisha. It is common practice to trace their origins via legendary tales that detail their formation and migration to the area. Over the course of history, it is quite probable that the Mankirdias came to Mayurbhanj in pursuit of rich land and resources, and they finally settled in the hills and woods of the district. Because of these communities, they were able to build a unique identity that was strongly connected to the land. Their traditional means of subsistence consisted of activities such as hunting, collecting, and occupations that were based in the forest.

Both their social structures and cultural practices were shaped by their relationships with surrounding groups as well as the sociopolitical dynamics of Mayurbhanj, which included the control of the princely state and, subsequently, the rule of colonial powers. Despite the demands from the outside world, the Mankirdias were able to maintain their cultural identity by adjusting to new circumstances while maintaining their fundamental principles. Their rites, ceremonies, and environmental practices have been handed down from generation to generation via oral traditions, and it is clear that they have a profound connection to the earth.

For the purpose of maintaining the history of the tribe, oral traditions are very important since they communicate information about the tribe's origins, social conventions, and techniques for environmental management. The Mankirdias' cultural continuity and resilience in the face of change are strengthened by the preservation of this ancestral knowledge, which is accomplished via the telling of stories and the involvement of the community.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The rich cultural legacy of Mayurbhanj, which is highlighted by its lively festivals, traditional dances, and folk songs, offers a profound backdrop for comprehending the Mankirdias, who are an indigenous group that resides in the area. The fact that their beginnings are rooted in mythical stories and historical migrations reveals that they have a strong connection to the land and the resources it provides. The Mankirdias established themselves amid the varied topography of the area, and as a result, they formed a distinct cultural identity that was based on traditional activities like as hunting, gathering, and performance of rituals. In spite of the fact that the tribe has been subjected to colonial control and the influence of adjacent groups, it has managed to keep its fundamental principles by means of oral traditions, which are of critical importance in ensuring the continuation of its historical and cultural practices. The lasting rituals of the Mankirdias are a reflection of their resiliency and adaptation, and they demonstrate how deeply their cultural legacy is linked with the larger cultural fabric of Mayurbhanj. The strength of their cultural identity is shown by the fact that they are able to adjust to changing conditions while still conserving their ancestral wisdom. This also underlines the need of continuing to promote and celebrate their distinctive history.

## REFERENCES

1. Anuradha, K. (2020). *Evaluation of Bonda Development Agency Mudulipada, Malkangiri District.*
2. Ambagudia, J. (2019). *Adivasis, preferential policy and the state in Odisha. Social Change, 49(2), 199-215.*
3. Behura, N. K., & Mohanti, K. K. (1998). *Vulnerable Ethno-Cultural Groups (VEGs). Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PTGs) of Odisha.*
4. Bulliyya, G. (2010). *Ethnographic and health profile of the Dongria Kondhs: A primitive tribal group of Niyamgiri hills in Eastern Ghats of Orissa. Afro Asian Journal of Anthropology and Social Policy, 1(1), 11-25.*

5. Deep, P. (2020). *Democratic governance, inclusive policies and people standing at the margins. Journal of Social Inclusion Studies*, 6(2), 133-151.
6. Ghosal, J., Bal, M., Das, A., Panda, B., Ranjit, M., Behera, M. R., ... & Pati, S. (2024). *To leave no one behind: Assessing utilization of maternal newborn and child health services by all the 13 particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs) of Odisha, India. Health Research Policy and Systems*, 22(1), 12.
7. Jora, B. (2020). *Expressives in Birhor. In Expressives in the South Asian Linguistic Area (pp. 259-277). Brill.*
8. Khatoon, G. (2016). *Ethno-medicines used for treatment of gynaecological disorders of tribal women in Mayurbhanj district of Odisha. Journal of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute (SCSTRI)*, 56(1), 60-63.
9. Maharana, R., & Nayak, J. K. (2017). *Educational status among the particularly vulnerable tribal groups of Odisha. International Journal of Applied Research*, 3(4), 499-504.
10. Mall, A. (2020). *Indigenous Knowledge on Selection, Sustainable Utilization Of Local Flora And Fauna For Food By Tribes (PTG) Of Odisha: A Potential Resource For Food And Environmental Security.*
11. Mohanty, S., Thamminaina, A., & Kanungo, P. (2019). *Delivering quality education to girls from Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) In India. Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews*, 7(1), 367-375.
12. Muniraju, S. B., & Thakur, M. R. (2018). *Development deficits of particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs) and way forward. Tribal Development Policy in India.*
13. Nayak, J. K. (2014). *From Hunter Gatherer to Semi Forager: A Case Study on Developmental Trajectory of the Mankirdias of Odisha.*
14. Pattnaik, P. P., & Rao, Y. G. (2020). *Universal Bench Mark Survey of one Sample Micro Project (Hill-Kharia & Mankirdia Development Agency, Jashipur, Mayurbhanj District, Odisha) and Formulation of Perspective Plan.*

15. Terangpi, A. (2023). *When sacred land is converted into public spaces, how does this affect the memory and lives of the Karbi: A case study of Chomkan. Antrocom: Online Journal of Anthropology, 19(2).*

### **Author's Declaration**

I as an author of the above research paper/article, here by, declare that the content of this paper is prepared by me and if any person having copyright issue or patent or anything otherwise related to the content, I shall always be legally responsible for any issue. For the reason of invisibility of my research paper on the website /amendments /updates, I have resubmitted my paper for publication on the same date. If any data or information given by me is not correct, I shall always be legally responsible. With my whole responsibility legally and formally have intimated the publisher (Publisher) that my paper has been checked by my guide (if any) or expert to make it sure that paper is technically right and there is no unaccepted plagiarism and hentriconane is genuinely mine. If any issue arises related to Plagiarism/ Guide Name/ Educational Qualification /Designation/ Address of my university/college/institution/ Structure or Formatting/ Resubmission/Submission /Copyright /Patent /Submission for any higher degree or Job/Primary Data/Secondary Data Issues. I will be solely/entirely responsible for any legal issues. I have been informed that the most of the data from the website is invisible or shuffled or vanished from the database due to some technical fault or hacking and therefore the process of resubmission is there for the scholars/students who finds trouble in getting their paper on the website. At the time of resubmission of my paper I take all the legal and formal responsibilities, If I hide or do not submit the copy of my original documents (Andhra/Driving License/Any Identity Proof and Photo) in spite of demand from the publisher then my paper maybe rejected or removed from the website anytime and may not be consider for verification. I accept the fact that as the content of this paper and the resubmission legal responsibilities and reasons are only mine then the Publisher (Airo International Journal/Airo National Research Journal) is never responsible. I also declare that if publisher finds Any complication or error or anything hidden or implemented otherwise, my paper may be removed from the website or the watermark of remark/actuality maybe mentioned on my paper. Even if anything is found illegal publisher may also take legal action against me.

### **Miss Raimani marndi**

\*\*\*\*\*