

Revival of Tribal Fashion and Lifestyle: A Case Study of Western Odisha

Dr. Sudhanshubala Tripathy¹, Mrs. Shubhranshubala Tripathy²

¹Assistant Professor (Teacher Education) History, Dr. PMIASE, Sambalpur, Govt. of Odisha

²Assistant Teacher, Govt. High School, Khari, Govt. of Odisha

Abstract:

Odisha is a land of primitive tribal culture, full of picturesque colourful natural sceneries. It has inherited a wealth of traditional art and culture. In western Odisha, the elements of tribal cultural heritage have become a determining factor of the fashion trend. Most of the traditional tribal arts and crafts have come to find favour in the minds of art lovers and fashion designers not only in India but also in the world. On the contrary, due to a lack of proper training and sound technical knowledge, the tribals don't find the means to promote their arts and natural creative skills. This paper focuses on the specific traditional art forms of tribals of Western Odisha and also advocates for the requirement of private-public support to promote local art and design in the global fashion industries and social media.

Keywords: Primitive tribal culture, fashion trend, technical knowledge, private-public support)

Introduction:

India has the largest concentration of the tribal population and is found in almost every part of the world. Tribals are believed to be the earliest settlers in the Indian peninsula. The primitive original inhabitants of western Odisha are called "Adivasi". The Adivasi has a wonderful style and tradition. The fashion of a community is featured by its fast-changing trends and lifestyle. Culture and lifestyle are two important factors that affect how we talk, how we dress, and how we relate and communicate among different inter and intra-social groups. In this way, the tribes of western Odisha owe a lot of cultural identity to their way of art. The mud-plastered walls of huts and earthen grain bins are the common canvas on which tribal people paint their framework which is elaborately drawn and ornamented with natural dots, triangles and many more to draw flora and faunas, men and women, sun, light, moon, stars, etc. From cave paintings to other ways of canvas, they have been drawing their inherent sense of design and their commitment to beauty in their daily lives. Due to a lack of proper training and sound technical knowledge, the local artisans don't find the means to promote their art and natural creative skills.

Every community has its roots and fashion culture across time, diversity and seasons. The peculiar blend of tribal fashion with its various communities, heritages, and lifestyles has provided a new outlook to the world. Indian culture has a great influence on the fashion choices. The ethnic and traditional outfits illustrate the fusion of our vibrant cultural heritage and ever-growing global trends.

Empowerment of tribal women and their lifestyle development are considered as an important essence to make them more confident, and self-reliant and to develop the ability to make self-decisions. Despite various measures taken by the government in India, tribal people are marked to get ill treatment and are deprived educationally, socially, economically, culturally and politically for generations together. Many

constitutional and legal provisions have been made to safeguard the interest tribal people of Odisha in particular and India in general. The women of scheduled tribes are the worst sufferers for many decades. The constitution of India guarantees some of the privileges to these sections of people.

Tribes are concerned, constitutionally and legally all the opportunities are available, but caste society does not allow them to enjoy them. All the upper caste people dominating the government have intentions to change the Constitution instead of implementing it. Therefore, all the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes must organize politically, dominate the governments and implement the Constitution, as well as the laws. Then only can fulfil the objectives of the Constitution and laws to protect the interest of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and bring them into the mainstream of society.

Review of related literature:

The researcher has conducted an exhaustive literature survey on the topic. The contents have been taken from relevant books and articles, journals and websites.

Samal Radhakanta and Patra Sudhakar (2015) studied the Consumption Pattern of Tribes in the Kondhamal District of Odisha to analyse the consumption pattern of the Kandha tribes of the Kandhamal district of Odisha, who are suffering from multidimensional backwardness.

Bhuyan Ramakanta (2020) studied some reflections on the folk arts of Odisha – challenges and prospects and briefly analysed the challenges and prospects of the tribal people of Odisha.

Tripathy, S. (2021) conducted a study on the Impact of education on women's empowerment and the lifestyle of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe women.

Sarkar, P., and Bairagi, N. (2023) investigated “Evolving Identity: A Study on Changing Choices in the Clothing of Tribal Women of Tripura India”. The objective was to study the transformation of costume among the Tripuri tribal women of Tripura, India. It was found that with the impact of outer society, sociocultural reasons, and attraction towards contemporary trends, there is a transformation in the traditional costume.

Tripathy, S.N. (2023) studied “tribes and textile handloom of Odisha: with special reference to Koraput”.

Bucchetti, V., Barbara, A., Allard, J., Scupelli, P., and Mikhail, R. A. (2023) studied “Identities and (changing) identities: A crossroads of cultures, translation, and digital innovation”. This study critiques the contributions submitted to the Identities and (Changing) Identities track for the tenth Congress of the International Association of Societies of Design Research.

Bhandare, I, Priti Patwari And Payal Musmade (April 2024) studied “Revitalizing Tribal Fashion: Analysing Potential in India” taking three objectives: The first objective was to support and promote the development of the tribal fashion industry by using technology; the second objective was to explore, analyse and give solutions on unidentified tribal fashion with current modern tools; The last objective was to identify the challenges and barriers faced by tribal communities in adopting technology. This study highlighted the importance of preserving and promoting the traditional fashion of various tribes.

Shah Shubhangi (July 2024) studied “Weaving the tribal narrative” and highlighted on modern interpretation of tribes, tribal instinct, local participation, and their emotions; and appreciated the work of “TRIFED” under the Ministry of tribal affairs.

OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of the current study are as follows:

1. To study the tribal fashion of western Odisha.

- To promote tribal culture and fashion of western Odisha in the fashion market may be by publishing a magazine, exhibiting their art, doing a collection, starting a design firm for them and selling it on the global market.

HYPOTHESIS:

The hypotheses formulated by the investigator in the present study was as “There exists positive impact of the tribal fashion of western Odisha on the globe”. Therefore, there is a need to promote tribal culture and fashion of western Odisha in the fashion market.

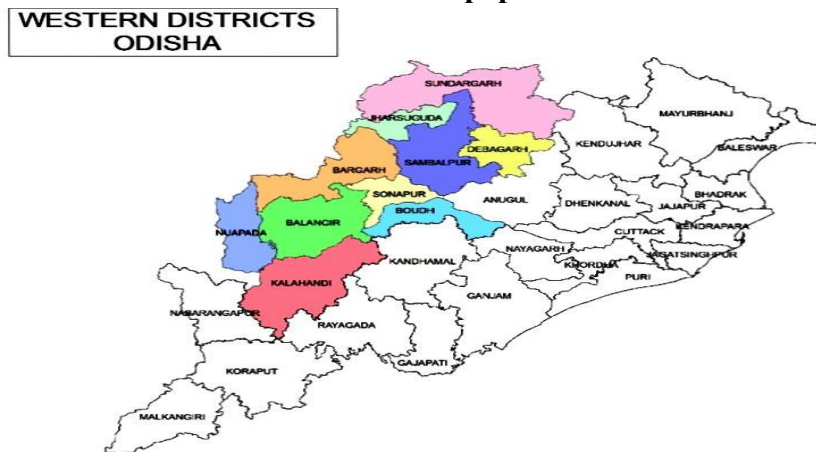
DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

- The study was delimited to Western Odisha.
- The study was delimited to people belonging to scheduled tribe of western Odisha.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE OF WESTERN ODISHA:

Investigation of the current theme was conducted in western part of Odisha. Out of 30 districts in Odisha, India; western Odisha comprises of 10 districts and one sub-division such as Bargarh, Bolangir, Sambalpur, Subarnapur, Boudh, Deogarh, Jharsuguda, Kalahandi, Nuapada and Sundargarh and Athmalik subdivision of district Anugul district. Geographically western Odisha is located in the longitude between 19.3°N to 22.32°N and latitude between 82.61°E to 84.32°E. All districts and sub-divisions which comprises of west part of Odisha have been given in Figure 1.

Figure -1 Map showing Districts and sub-division constituting Western Odisha for Site of population



As per 2011 census, total tribal population of India is 104,281,034 which was 8.6% of the total population of India. Again, the state tribal population is 95,90,756 which was 22.85% of the state’s total population whereas the tribal population of western Odisha is 3,076,743. Different tribal groups like Soura, Binjhal, Gond, Khonds, Dal, Shabar, Santals, Bhatars, Banjaras, Parajas, Bhunjias, Paharias, Kisan, Oraon etc. are seen in western part of Odisha.

Table-1: Total population versus tribal population as per 2011 Census

As per 2011 Census		
	In figure	In percentage
Total population of India	1,21,01,93,422	17.5% of the World population
Tribal population of India	104,282,034	8.6% of the total population of India
Total population of Odisha	41,974,218	3.51% of the total population of India
Tribal population of Odisha	95,90,756	22.85% of the total state population
Total population of Western Odisha	10,406,792	24.79% of the state population
Tribal population of Western Odisha	3,076,743	29.56% of the total population of western Odisha

As seen in the Table-1, tribal population of Western Odisha is 3,076,743 in figure which is 29.56 % of the total population of western Odisha covering tribal mass of 11 districts and one subdivision. In Bargarh district, the tribal population is 281,135 which is 17.82 % of the total population of the district. Similarly, the tribal population of sambalpur is 355,261; Bolangir is 347,164; Subarnapur is 52,987; Kalahandi is 449,456; Boudh is 55,364; Nuapada is 206,327; Jharsuguda is 176,758; Koraput is 697,583; Deogarh is 92,103; Sundargarh is 10,62,349; and Athmallik subdivision is 845 in figure.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY:

A retrospective review of literature on different aspects, areas and cultures of tribals reveals a small number of studies on the revival of tribal fashion and lifestyle of western Odisha. Despite the growing importance of tribal empowerment in general and empowerment of women belonging to scheduled tribes in particular, there is a dearth of systematic research studies relating to the fashion and culture of scheduled tribes concerning three aspects of their empowerment; such as tribal fashion, Tribal clothing and jewellery. Studies related to tribal problems are important to find out the ways and means for the betterment of the tribal people in western Odisha in particular and Odisha in general through their art and craft. The main goal of this study is to examine how we can involve the rural and tribal artists of western Odisha in the fashion industry. It will help educators, scholars, social reformers, and fashion designers think critically about a unique platform for the creative world of Aboriginal people. The art, paintings, crafts, and designs of the tribal people of western Odisha have the promotion requirement. By studying the local fashion market, and the target group, the researcher may predict the possible reasons for the problems and can be able to provide suggestions for the progress of art and craft of the tribal people of the locality. The study will also help the social architect to transform their skills and creativity into the fashion world in society.

METHODS:

The study is based on the sample survey where multi-stage random and purposive sampling has been used. Secondary data inclusive of quantitative and qualitative have been collected from various sources including books, research papers, magazines and websites.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

All the persons belonging to the scheduled tribe and living in Western Odisha constitute the population of the present study.

At first, Odisha, one of the highly concentrated tribal states of India was chosen due to its large tribal population. As an area of interest, the tribal mass of Western Odisha is chosen as the population. Out of 10 districts and one subdivision of western Odisha, the total of two districts having the highest tribal population of western Odisha have been selected using The Table of Random Numbers (Fisher and Yates, 1963) for the fieldwork; i.e.- Sundargarh and Kalahandi district. Within the process of field study, some officials acted as a helping hand for guiding. Some villages and places have been randomly selected viz. Nuagaon, Bisra, Hemgiri, Rajgangpur, Rajibpur, Nuaguda, Teresingha and Bhangabari (10 families from each of the selected villages and regions).

TOOLS & SOURCES:

1. District profile of Sundargarh and Kalahandi districts (Secondary Sources).
2. District profile of different tribes existing in Western Odisha (Survey through secondary sources available).
3. District profile of tribal folk arts and culture (Culture-Festivals-Folk-art of Sundargarh and Kalahandi district)
4. Detection and Demographic Analysis of people engaged in tribal folk-art activity by conducting a survey of the population, engaged in Tribal folk art -Number of members (male/female)
5. Discovering how their art and culture affect present-day fashion scenarios.
6. Conducting a comparative study on their traditional fashion and comparing it with today’s fashion.
7. Meeting the crowd-knowing about their clothing style-origin-history-innovation-interviewing and collecting facts and swatches (Primary & Secondary)

DATA ANALYSIS:

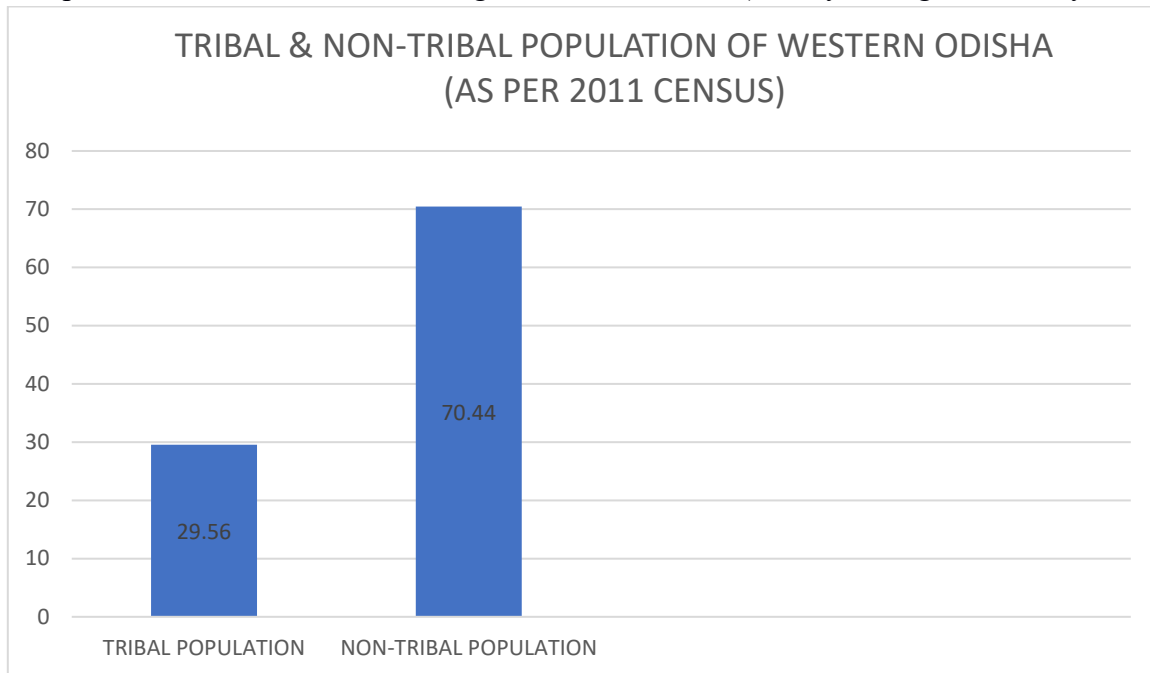
1. District profile of Sundargarh and Kalahandi districts (Secondary Sources).

District	Total population	Male	Female	Growth rate	Sex Ratio	Literacy Rate
Sundargarh	2,093,437	1,061,147	1032290	13.66%	973F/1000M	73.34%
Kalahandi	1576869	787,101	789,768	17.79%	1003F/1000M	59.22%

2. District Tribal profile of Sundargarh and Kalahandi district (Secondary Sources).

District	Total tribal population	Tribal Male	Tribal Female	Tribal Growth rate	Tribal Sex Ratio	Tribal Literacy Rate
Sundargarh	10,62,349	5,26,856	5,35,493	16%	1016F/1000M	53.11%
Kalahandi	449,456	221171	228,285	28%	1011F/1000M	52.16%

3. District profile of different tribes existing in Western Odisha (Survey through secondary sources)



4. Conducting a comparative study on the tribal traditional fashion and comparing it with today’s fashion:

The tribes of Western Odisha consist of 42 tribal groups inhabiting Odisha in India.

- Hunter-gatherer type: - Bhatars, Banjaras, Kol, Ho, bondoporaja etc.
- Shifting to Agriculture: - Parajas, Bhunjias, Paharias, Kisan, kolha, koli, Dharua, etc.
- Simple Artisan: - Soura, Binjhal, Gond, Khonds, etc.
- Settled Agriculturists: - Dal, Shabar, Santals, Oraon etc.

5. In western Odisha, a tribal group named BINJHALs have been identified by their traditional dress, ornaments and tattoo marks. Kondhs are famous for their wall painting which is geometrical in design. Likewise, the Santals and Souras are famous for their house painting which are of figurative patterns. Some groups of tribes use Sambalpuri clothes which are very beautiful in look. Likewise, the tribals of these areas have their dress designs. Both males and females wear different and common dresses and ornaments on different occasions. Sometimes, it is seen that dresses are designed from easily and popularly available natural resources. But the colour combination and the fabrics used are so traditional and limited. Even it is found that they don’t use modern technical tools and skills for commercial purposes. The profit margin of the producers is very small. Thus, hardly any designed dress has taken place in the local or global market for high return.

6. One of the great issues at the primary level is that the arts and crafts are limited to very few families and restricted to the local market only. Due to the typical pattern of dresses and designs, the non-tribal group of people don’t show interest in using dresses or designs frequently. Although the government of Odisha has taken certain initiatives through some schemes and programmes like MBBKSY, OTELP, Mudra weaver scheme, etc., for the development of the tribes, it is not properly working out. It is observed that due to the absence of linkage with technical institutions, design schools and marketing bodies which could promote the development of the tribal art and craft; possibilities of future progress have faded away.

RESULTS:

The research study “Revival of tribal fashion and lifestyle of western Odisha”, was an effort to promote their art and culture; study the tribal fashion of western Odisha and promote it in the fashion market which requires the following activities: -

1. Documentation and refining of the research on this area may lead to future progress and prosperity of this locality. It is important to collect interesting facts about them to make further research more eye-catching.
2. Secondly, a tribal magazine of western Odisha should be published. Designing a tribal magazine which will be entirely devoted to the tribes of western Odisha and reviving their fashion will provide a platform for young writers for intellectual and creative expression.
3. Thirdly, a Tribal mela or Adimela should be conducted in this area every month to revive the tribal art, craft and sculpture. It will be more effective by collecting traditional art and crafts and exhibiting it to the people.
4. A documentary movie should be made regarding the folk, art, craft, painting, dance-music and tribal go of the life of western Odisha by collecting interesting facts about the tribal mass of this locality.
5. There should be more design collections regarding the art, handloom, handicrafts, paintings, ornaments, folk tales, etc. of the tribal people of western Odisha.
6. The tribal timber, fuel wood fooder, cane and bamboo-made products are worthy to show in the fashion market. Likewise, about the garments, the tribal's dhoti, Gamucha, Ghagra & Choli, etc., about ornaments, the broad silver necklace bands, nose rings, hair clips, etc. embellish the tribal beauty which should be shown in the fashion world.
7. The tribals people of western Odisha are famous for producing cotton handloom and silk textiles which can be connected with the tribals with the cotton handloom textile industry.
8. The Kondh and Kui tribal groups are famous for their Gooda Art called Tattoos painting on the different parts of their body. There is a folk believe that wild animals will not harm them if they draw tattoos painted in their body. The materials used in their body are purely natural and they believe and tell that the tattoo painting will go with them to the next rebirth.
9. Although the researchers belong to western Odisha, they have found no fashion house or fashion industry in western Odisha. As fashion is an important element for cultural reservations all over the globe, there should be a tribal cultural fashion industry in western Odisha.

Suggestions:

The cultural modernization sponsored by the forces of globalization has a greater and faster impact on the tribal people of any locality. Both the state govt. as well as the central govt. is providing funds for tribal welfare. But most of the funds are either underutilised or unutilised. Therefore, provisions should be made for effective utilization of Government funds in tribal welfare. Different NGOs should take care of the tribal betterment of this locality. Industrialists should establish their industries to promote the vanishing tribal art and culture of western Odisha. Market chain and Retail shop outlets should be situated in this area. As this area is a treasure house of great opportunity and potency, Fashion designers should concentrate their ideas in this area to mix up this tribal knowledge with world knowledge. Modern technology and skill-based training for the local artisan can open the door towards a global identity.

Conclusion:

The socio-cultural milieu of tribal mass cannot be overlooked while discussing tribal empowerment. It can be possible through the revival of the natural skills of the tribal people which is full of inborn potential. It needs the right platform to achieve a global role in the fashion industry that is closely associated with the culture of the society where tribal masses live.

References:

1. Bairagi, N., Selvadhas, A., and Archarya, S.(2023) Innovative collaboration and co-designing with Santhal and Mohli tribes of Dumka, India, in De Sainz Molestina, D., Galluzzo, L., Rizzo, F., Spallazzo, D. (eds.), *IASDR 2023: Life-Changing Design*, 9-13 October, Milan, Italy. <https://doi.org/10.21606/iasdr.2023.487>
2. <https://www.financialexpress.com/author/shubhangi-shah/>
3. ISHA BHANDARE, PRITI PATWARI & PAYAL MUSMADE (2024).REVITALIZING TRIBAL FASHION:ANALYZING POTENTIAL IN INDIA. International Journal of Novel Research and Development | Volume 9, Issue 4 April 2024| ISSN: 2456-4184, pg: B369-B379.
4. Sarkar, P.,and Bairagi, N.(2023) Evolving Identity: A Study on changing choices in the Clothing of Tribal Women of Tripura India., in De Sainz Molestina, D., Galluzzo, L., Rizzo, F., Spallazzo, D. (eds.), *IASDR 2023: Life-Changing Design*, 9-13 October, Milan, Italy. <https://doi.org/10.21606/iasdr.2023.499>
5. Samal Radhakanta & Patra Sudhakar(2015). Consumption Pattern of Tribes in Kondhamal District of Odisha. *Asian Journal of Research in Business Economics and Management*. 5 (3) pg: 96-104. 2249-7307. Article DOI : [10.5958/2249-7307.2015.00061.4](https://doi.org/10.5958/2249-7307.2015.00061.4)
6. Singh, B(2020). *Tribal history of Odisha*. Edited Book.
7. Bhuyan, R. (2020). *SOME REFLECT ON FOLK ARTS OF ODISHA—CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS*. Editorial Board, 9(7).
8. Tripathy, S. *Impact of education on women empowerment and life style of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe women*.
9. Tripathy, S.N. (2023). Tribes and textile handloom of Odisha: with special reference to Koraput. volume 13, issue-1, page-81-90. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5958/2583-3561.2023.00009.7>
10. National Commission for Scheduled Tribes.2016
11. https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.india.gov.in/people-groups/community/scheduled-tribesschedule-caste&ved=2ahUKEwiMitWEnIaKAXXhK8BHfcPKfkQFnoECBcQAQ&usg=AOvVaw0Q5GjhddC_1fwyNWPEzI
12. https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.rtiodisha.gov.in/Departments/11&ved=2ahUKEwinou2bnIaKAXUOZfUHHZh7LW0QFnoECBoQAQ&usg=AOvVaw1gady7bFVgUc9igVmz1H_F
13. https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.scstrti.in/&ved=2ahUKEwinou2bnIaKAXUOZfUHHZh7LW0QFnoECBcQAw&usg=AOvVaw0iOePI6_QNJ9dAf4rqkKIA