

AT A GLIMPSE OF COMMUNAL DISPARITIES IN
ODISHA
(A COMPILED STUDY OF KANDHAMAL DISTRICT)

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At a Glimpse of Communal Disparities in Odisha (A compiled study of Kandhamal district) is written after the collection of information's from different sources such as print and electronic Medias that were taken place in different points of times soon after the communal riot took place in the Kandhamal district. The author collected all the information from the above different sources and felt to write an article on the same after long gap of waiting as per his personal realization. The entire message in the said article is quoted from the different media sources. Therefore, the readers are humble requested not to take it otherwise because the fact and figures have been taken place in different sources at different points of time. In this articles following few things are prioritized; that are most essential to make a complete write up such as abstract of the district, constitutional obligation, abstract on nation's and state's tribe population, religion and its status in the district, causes and consequences of the riot and finally the author's personal suggestion which may be appropriate to gain an national integration and solidarity among Indian citizens.

1. Abstract of the district:

In fact Kandhamal district of Odisha is one among the thirty districts located central south region of Odisha state with majority of tribal population. The total population of the district according to 2011 census is 733,110 constituted male and female number 359,945 and 373,165 respectively. The district lies between 83.30° E to 84-48° E longitude and 19-34° N to 20-54° latitude. The district headquarter is Phulbani located in the central part of the district. The other popular locations are Baliguda, G. Udayagiri, Tikabali and Raikia. The territory is rural,

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with scenic (lovely) beauty such as waterfalls and springs, and also has a number of historical antiquities. The initial provisional released by census India 2011, show that density of Kandhamal district for 2011 is 91 people per sq.km, which was 81 people per sq.km in 2001.

In fact the tribes are animism; neither have they belonged to Christian nor Hindu or of any other religion. Nature and natural thing is the God of tribes. They believe in supernatural power. The tribes may adopt or profess any religion, not only in India but also in other continent of the universe. World indigenous people are otherwise known as tribal, depending on collection of forest produces, cultivation (shifting or settled), hunting wild animals and also collection of honey from the forest source. Land, water, and forest, are chief sources and considered as primary sources of livelihood. When one looks back at the global scenario, then in South Africa most of the tribes are living still in primitive life and their number is more as compare to other continents. Sociologist and anthropologist present their descriptive views as they are aborigine and animism. The entire life of tribal is intimately attached and associated with the forest as well as with natural thing. In the Indian context some of the religious practice of tribes resemble with Hindu religion. viz. worshiping of sun as supernatural power..

2. Constitutional obligation

Preamble of our motherland say we the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic and republic and to secure to all its citizens. JUSTICE, social, economic and political; LIBERTY, of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation; Article 25-28 of the constitution of India guarantees the right of freedom of religion. Article- 25 speaks freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion, article- 26 freedom to manage religious affairs, article- 27 freedoms as to payment of taxes for promotion of any particular religion and finally Article- 28 speaks of freedom as to attendance at religious instruction or religious worship in certain education institutions. Though the right to freedom of speech and expression (article-19) envisages the philosophy of freedom of religion in India because despite of the creation of Pakistan, a lot of Muslims were scattered all over India, part from Sikhs, Parsees, Christians and others. To respect and obligate to it, is the primary obligation of all citizen irrespective of caste, race, creed, religion or any background. In such a secular state, multi-religion is thrown open to adopt and profess by any individual citizens of

nation. Religions are as such; Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, Jainism, and Sikh etc. There is no such religion in the nation that is excluded from the concept of **hell and heaven**. Irrespective of all religions, receiving heavenly reward is the ultimate ambition, which differentiates the methods in worshipping to almighty God. It is believed, the God is pervasive and omnipresent, he does not confine in any particular location, religion, group, community or a nation. All religion directs and leads one to receive heavenly reward depending upon isolated and pure spiritual meditation and rendering of service to mankind. Therefore, it is called service to mankind is service to God. In an unclear concept and understanding on religion, create great confusion and disparity among human being. Corollary of which generate communal disparities and violence. Therefore, just to bring the clarity on misunderstanding on inter-religious conflict, and bringing balance in communal harmony in the universe, there are some global based organizations coming forward and working voluntarily since from couple of decades, such organizations are (i) World congress of faith (1936), (ii) World alliance of friendship through religion and church peace union (1924), (iii) World brotherhood (1950), (iv) World spiritual council (1946) (v) Society for the study of Religion (1924). The significance of our motherland is to bring inter-religion understanding and integration. Dr. Albert Schweitzer rightly said western and Indian philosopher should not have argument and criticism on “what you do is right and what other is wrong” both of these would have a common aim and destination. (*Courtesy by Gangadhar Bolo, the Samaj odia news paper dated on 26/05/2009*)

3. Nation's and state's tribes

In fact in India, there are more than 420 tribes are living in different corner of the different states. Of the 420 tribes' 39 tribes are selected as main tribes of India. (*Tribal India by Nadeem Hasnain*). Among the selected tribes, the Kondhas are one among the selected tribes of India. In the same way states wise tribes' numbers varies from state to states. The Odisha state is having 62 types of tribes living in different parts of 30 districts, depending on land, water and forest culture economy. Among the 30 districts of Odisha, Kandhamal district was world wide highlighted in couple of years back due to ethnic communal riot. The Kandhamal is a scheduled district, where in majority of Kondha tribes are still living below poverty lines. According to 2001 census report, tribes of Kandhamal district are 3, 36,809, whereas SC populations are 1,09,506, within 12(twelve) different Blocks in the district. Similarly total literacy rate of the district population was 52.68. During the 1991 census ST literacy percentage was 27.49 and in

2001 census 44.47, which is 16.98% more than previous census. The SC literacy rate was 55.36 that were 18.85% more than 1991 census. From it, this is clearly indicated that, 1.87% of SC populations are more literate than of ST population of the Kandhamal district in Odisha. In the same way the total population according to 2011 census is 733,110 out of which male and female numbers are 359,945 and 373,165 respectively. The Kandhamal district population constitutes 1.75 percent of total Maharashtra population and in 2001 census this figure for Kandhamal district was at 1.76 percent of Maharashtra population. Incase of average literacy rate as per 2011 census was 64.13 comparable to 52.68 of 2001, where in male and female literacy is 76.93 and 51.94 respectively. The high qualified among the tribes of Kandhamal district is very less than other population.

4. Religion and its status in the district

India is a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic and republic country. Article-25 of fundamental right of our Indian constitution speaks of freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion. As per 2001 census report there are six different religions are commonly professed by different categories of population in the Kandhamal district of Odisha. Those are Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Buddhist, and Jainism. Numerically the Hindus are 5,27,757, Muslim 2,253, Christian 1,17,950, Sikh 23, Buddhist 14 and Jain 20. Among these the Buddhist number is very less. Hindu religion is the largest one where as Christian minorities are the next second largest one. Adoption and professing of religion in our Indian context, depends on one-self and in rare cases external force is intertwined. In exceptional cases people are converting self in to other religion willingly for the sake of spiritual gain, or some may be for the sake of receiving personal advantages from religious institutions, where in such cases deep and real spiritual feeling of people is rarely realized.

5. Causes and consequences

In the respective Kandhamal district, consecutively twice-ethnic communal din and bustle occurred within the gap of eight months. The first ethnic communal violence occurred on 25th Dec.2007 On 25 December 2007, unrest broke out between Christians and Hindus and Kandha tribe and Pana caste people and the second one is on 23th August 2008 On 23 August 2008, Swami Lakshmanada Saraswati - a leader of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad was murdered by Maoist gunmen along with four others, including a boy. Maoist rebels took responsibility for the multiple murders, and incentivized religious conversions of Hindu tribals by Christian

missionaries. . This led to large scale riots between the indigenous Hindu Kandha tribe tribals and the converted Christian communities. The underlying causes are complex and cross political, religious and ethnic boundaries. Land encroachments perceived or otherwise being a particular source of tension between the communities. In April 2010, a special "fast track" court in Phulbani convicted 105 people. Ten people were acquitted due to lack of evidence. (*Courtesy Kandhamal district Wikipedia the free encyclopedia*)

. As per the print and electronic media communication sources, it could be said rapid conversion into Christian religion, land disputes, and issuing of fake caste certificate in the district was the prime causes of violence. With regards to religion conversion it could be indiscriminately and humbly said, that "What you do is right and what other is wrong" (Dr. Albert Schweitzer) this particular notion and feeling is commonly observed among the population of different religion in the state. In such cases a particular groups of person are taking advantages of this, and innocent tribal becoming victim and are still suffering in their normal life.

The other causes of said turmoil in the district might be the issuing of fake caste certificates and illegal occupying of land. Till date 876 fake caste certificate allegations had been so far received by district administration, and 510 fake caste certificates have been forwarded to the scrutiny committee to take appropriate action as per law. As use of fake caste certificate to gain undue advantage in service and other matters by a certain sections of people was considered a major allegation. As many as 1,383 cases of land disputes relating to ST people has been identified for inquiry, while 209 such cases have been registered by the revenue officials so far. A major chunk of the land disputes cases considered prime reason behind the contention between the two sections, comes under Baliguda sub-division jurisdiction of Kandhamal district in Odisha. (*Courtesy the Statements 29th May 2009*)

According to the Medias reports consecutively of two time violence occurred and over all innocent Christian minorities' community of both the sections (SC/ST) were adversely affected. The Raikia and Baliguda blocks under Baliguda Sub-division were highly affected by the ethnic turmoil. More than 38 people died, 600 villages were ransacked, 54000 people were left homeless and 295 churches were attacked. Around 800 criminal cases were registered in different police stations of the district, of this charge sheet has been filed in 500 old cases (*courtesy the new Indian express news paper 1st October 2013*) The kind and nature of suffering

among both sections of population were as follows (i) burning of their houses and properties. (ii) Peoples migration towards neighbors states such as in Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, (iii) migration towards state's urban areas such as in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack etc. (iv) enforcing them to be in relief camp, (v) some of them given life threatening etc. after couple of years the victims have some how came back to their native places but still few people are expected living out side of their natives by doing daily labor or contract labor. The relief camps were continued such a long period in different Gram Panchayat levels so as to protect the life of victims provided by the state government.

6. Possible Suggestions

To honor the life and dignities of human population in general as well as to Indian constitution, it is felt, there could be appropriate and possibility of giving suggestions so as to bring communal harmony and national integration among the people irrespective of religion and socio-economic background among Indian citizens. The suggestion mentioned below could be suitable if it will be gone through in depth understanding and practical implementation so far (i) constitutional provision regarding fundamental rights could be well disseminated among the people living in the district (ii) Awareness generation campaign should well be organized with suitable steps and strategies by the respective government, as well as district administration, so that, the preamble of Indian constitution could be honored and inter-religious solidarity and harmony could be well achieved. (iii) Land disputes cases could be tackled in an impartial basis and legal justice will be expected for the innocent tribes in the district, (iv) Issuing of fake certificate should be strictly banned and prohibited, also appropriate action will be taken by state government against the issuing authorities, if such cases to be happened in the district. (v) Declaration of special package of the state government for ST in the Kandhamal district should be fulfill within due time. (vi) In the Grass root community level tribal and inter-religions Surakhya munch is proposed to be set up and the district administration is to be requested to recognize the said. (vii) Part IX of Indian constitution, fifth scheduled and Panchayat raj Extension in Scheduled Areas Act-1996 will highly be recognized and implemented in the district so that, tribes in the district, would feel their land, water, and forest right. (viii) Provision of professional and technical education as well as quality-based education is strongly recommended to the present government for the rural population in the district (ix) National, international as well as grass root level NGOs must be encouraged by the district administration

to re-organize the sufferer of the riot and also efforts to be taken to bring about long run communal harmony among the different religious groups in the rural communities in the district. (x) Feeling of discrimination among different section of population should strictly be avoided by imparting moral education in the district. (xi) Third group population or the advantageous group will not be given such opportunities to entertain at the communities to create disturbances in community solidarity and harmony.

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