

Perceiving the Livelihood Challenges: An Anthropological Insight into the Dongria Kondhs of the Niyamgiri Hills of Rayagada, Odisha

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Abstract: *Livelihood studies emerge as the hallmark of social sciences in the present context, particularly in the domain of tribals who happen to be the most backward and marginalized (Sahoo, 2015). Feeding for self and the family is the fundamental aspect of the human existence followed by other socio-political-religious aspects which are secondary in the sense that they form the totality of humanity. So for this, the humankind has to engage upon certain kinds of activities to feed the empty stomach. It is in accordance that the concept of livelihood comes to the picture which is not merely a means for the very survival but itself constitutes a part of that culture. For livelihood is not only the way of earning a living but also the very means to live a life. However in the process of feeding herself she comes across a number of livelihood challenges, both socio-cultural as well as environmental. In this context, the present study throws light on the perceptions of the livelihood challenges as faced by the Dongria Kondhs, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG), and excellent shifting cultivators, residing in the Niyamgiri hill ranges of the Eastern Ghats in the state of Odisha. Any problem, before it materializes at the manifested level, comes first at the level of psychology of the people. Therefore keeping this in mind, the research was carried out to investigate how the natives perceive of the different circumstances coming out of the means of living and livelihoods; what is the thought process and what importance they heed to the subject of life and livelihood; and what they think of the causal factors behind the livelihood challenges - natural or man-made. This is what the cognitive anthropologists and ethno-scientists argue. For the entire worldviews of the people reflect as the overt behavior while the thought process beneath this is the crux of the matter and this particular study is a small endeavour to bring out the thoughts or perceptions about the emerging issues of lives and livelihoods of the Dongrias.*

Keywords: livelihood challenges, perception, climate change, shifting cultivation, Dongria Kondhs.

1. Introduction

‘Livelihoods’ incorporate all those activities by which a family earns income, in monetary and non-monetary terms, to feed and clothe its members, provide shelter, and take care of its needs such as health and nutrition, education and skills, and so on (Singh et al, 2013). Livelihood is defined as “the means of gaining a living, including tangible assets (resources and stores), intangible assets (claims and access), and livelihood capabilities including coping abilities, opportunities and sundry freedoms” (Chambers, 1995). Here the tangibles indicate the visible, i.e., the material possessions while the intangibles represent the invisibles i.e., the socio-political facets of the life. Thus livelihood is not only the way of earning a living but also the very means to live a life. While discussing the challenges as faced by the natives, one factor has almost been entirely omitted by a majority of researches is perceptual studies. Public perception is critical because it is an indispensable component of the socio-political context within which policy makers operate and public perception can fundamentally compel or constrain political, economic and social action to address participation risks (Falaki et al, 2013). Perception especially determines the social and mental pictures of any issue. But a number of other variables like socio-demographic and socio-economic factors on ideological orientations influence perception and the mental picture of that issue (Stedman, 2004).

2. Land and People

The Dongria Kondhs, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Troup (PVTG), reside on the hill tracts of the Niyamgiri ranges of the Eastern Ghats covering the districts of Rayagada and Kalahandi in the state of Odisha. They are one of the excellent shifting cultivators of the Indian sub-continent and are famous for their cultural attire which makes them distinguished from other tribal groups (Sahoo, 2015). Several Dongria villages (Khajuri, Radhanga, Gartali, Hutesi, Kurli, Khambesi etc.) were studied for collecting qualitative data like case histories. However census was carried out in the village Khajuri which is situated three km from the BissamCuttack railway station. It is a revenue village coming under the Block of BissamCuttack of Gunupur Sub-division, Rayagada Dist. The population structure of the village Khajuri is as follows.

Table 1: Population of village Khajuri in 2011 and 2015 (DKDA [Dongria Kondh Development Agency, a Micro Project, established during 5th Five Year Plan for the over-all development of the Dongria Kondhs.], 2015)

| Year | Total ST House-holds | Male | Female | Total population |
|------|----------------------|------|--------|------------------|
| 2011 | 78 | 170 | 194 | 364 |
| 2015 | 84 | 185 | 208 | 393 |

3. Objectives and Methodology used

Ethnographic method, the cornerstone of anthropology, is employed as the research methodology with emphasizing more uponemic perspectives. The research is theoretically

based upon human ecology approach which is a complex systems science, one that studies both biota and its physical environment, located in a specific place (Pickett and Cadenasso, 2012). Highlighting more, this particular approach is employed here considering the following compelling reasons: a) the continuing need to address environmental problems and their impact on people and culture; b) due to the complex man-environmental problems with linked biotic- abiotic components; c) humans rely on the productivity of eco-systems for all of their material culture; and d) anthropologists interested in understanding the present, historic and pre-historic provisioning of humanity should consider ecosystem-ecology as model of structure, functions and dynamics that can be applied to 'human ecosystem' studies (Abel and Stepp, 2003). It's in this context; all the facets of the lives and livelihoods of the *Dongria Kondhs* were thoroughly studied and linked to environment that is the physical milieu and other socio-cultural milieu making it a holistic study. Moreover, it is pertinent here to say that as the research was carried out to highlight the vast aspects of perceiving the livelihood challenges using participant observation, case histories and focused group discussions, qualitative aspects were majorly emphasized. Accordingly quantitative data were given secondary priority.

4. Findings and analysis

The *Dongria* livelihood structure hovers around horticulture and agriculture (the principal mode being the shifting cultivation), collecting minor forest produce (MFP) and other supporting activities like seasonal migration, small business entrepreneurship like transport business, shops and so on. In the process of practicing these economic activities, they face lots of difficulties. These difficulties are multi-directional and multi-dimensional. For instance, in agriculture and horticulture, the fundamental issues are paucity of cultivable land due to fragmentation of *Dongria* [Forest lands on hill slope], shortage of labour, water scarcity, desertification of *Dongria* (due to declining fallow period), post harvest challenges, lack of proper marketing facilities and so on. Food insecurity, especially a nutrient based food security, is the burning issue for *Dongrias*; impact of climate change, life style challenges, burden of disease affecting out of pocket spending on diseases and the issue of *Naxalism*, a definitely obstructing factor for livelihood opportunities are other hardships for a sustainable livelihood for the *Dongrias*. Let's examine the perceptions existing among the people regarding the lives and livelihoods and the challenges arising out of those processes.

Perception on shifting cultivation, the mainstay of Dongria livelihood and food insecurity:

The *Dongrias* are excellent shifting cultivators and have been practicing the occupation since their settlement on the hill slopes and the *poduchash* as it is called has been the foundational stone to their lives and livelihood without

which they don't have any existence. However there is the perception that it's fast changing. The productivity has declined and the gung-ho to work in the field enriching the *Dongria* has not been that fascinating and exciting among the youths. The population pressure definitely leads to fragmentation of the land-holdings but they believe these are beyond the scope of their hand. As per the older generation, the culture of dependence - on the government and on other organizations - has crippled them physically and mentally. The tendency has come that the youths have over conscious and over dependence on outsiders. Thus the elderly believe that the practice of shifting cultivation should continue as done in the past wherein the minimum fallow period used to be 5-6 years (which has been scientifically proven).

Table 2: Incomes From Crops and Deviations Found

| Crops | Normal income (in Rs.) | Deviations found (in Rs.) |
|-----------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Pineapple | 15000-18000 | 5000 |
| Ginger | 10000 - 15000 | 7000-8000 |
| Turmeric | 14000 - 17000 | 8000 - 10000 |
| Millet | 2000-3000 | 1000-1200 |
| Pulses | 4000 - 6000 | 1500-2000 |

The World Bank proposed a definition of food security which remains current today, broadening the emphasis from food availability to include access to food, and narrowing the focus from the global and national to households and individuals: "access by all people at all times of enough food for an active, healthy life" (World Bank, 1986). It fundamentally involves three components: food availability, food accessibility and food reliability.

Case study

Name: Shibu Kadraka

Age and gender: 36 years, male

Village: Khajuri

The family consists of him as the head, his wife, four children, a daughter-in-law and two grand children. He owns around one and half acres of land at the foothills where he cultivates paddy. The annual output he gets is approximately two to three quintals, insufficient to manage the year round needs of rice. Because the per capita requirement of rice is around eight to ten kilograms per month which in turn demands 80 to 100 kgs of rice. Though Shibu receives an amount of 35 kgs of rice under the Antodya Anna Yojana (AAY), only an additional source. If he collects both his harvest and AAY quota still he would be short of the stipulated requirement needed by his family. Apart from that in the festive occasions, the requirement doubles. Thus it could be well imagined the food availability in the hands of the *Dongrias*. The above case study is pertained to those few having lands cultivated for rice. But near about 90 per cent of them don't have that fortune to have paddy lands.

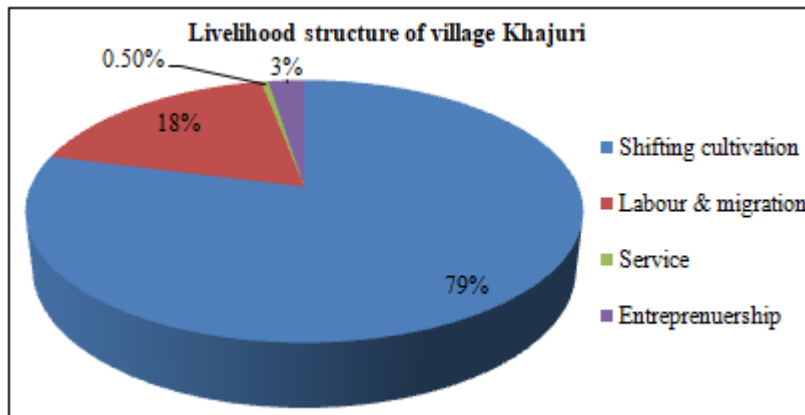


Figure 1: Livelihood structure of village Khajuri

Perception on climate change and impact on livelihood:

It is important to note is that age, gender, household size and education level matter most while speaking about perception of change of weather pattern. A *Dongria*, for instance, who perceives a decrease in amount of water flow in streams might have perceived differently if his/her age were

different, all other things being equal. Because seasons (dry or rainy) affect variables of streams and rivers in its circles, it may require experience based on age to identify that the streams don't return to their previous levels and boundaries after each circle (Falaki et al, 2013).

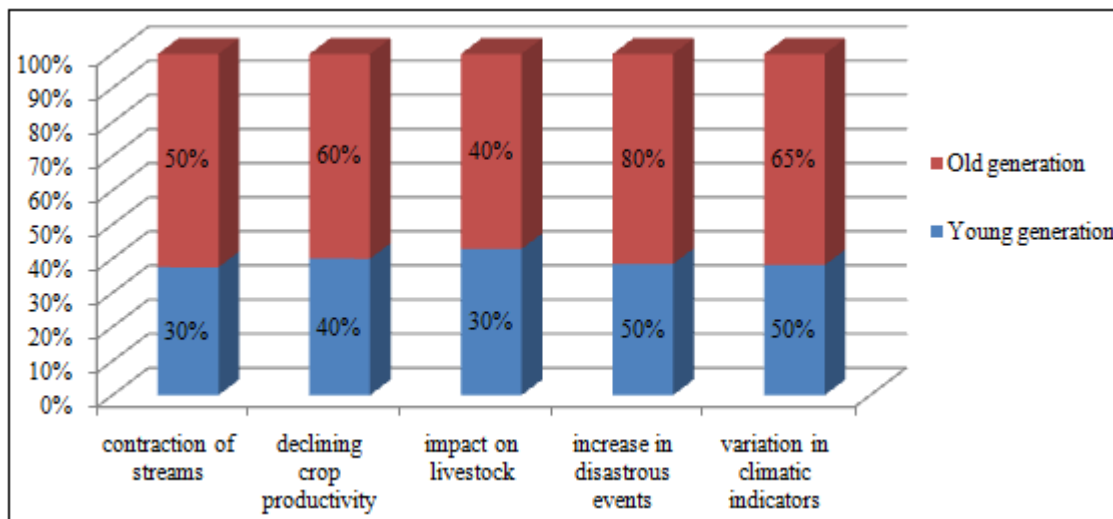


Figure 2: Perception of climate change and its impact on livelihood aspects

The *Dongrias* perceive a general increase in air temperature and decrease in average rainfall while irregular and untimely rainfall has increased along with the frequent cyclones in recent years agreeing to that the pattern of rainfall has changed negatively, unsuitable to agriculture especially the shifting cultivation and its impacts on other livelihood opportunities. For instance, the change in rainfall pattern has immensely affected the livestock rearing for it affects the availability of grazing grounds, which in turn, affects the health and bearing capacity of cows, buffalos, goats and others. What's more significant to note that they have experienced the dry spell in monsoon, a devastating consequence to the farmers. If the rain falls in small amount but at the expected time and spread over the period of planting, it is a good season for the *Dongrias*. Regarding the impact of climate change, the natives perceive that with increasing heat, the soil becomes more dry as soil moisture availability in the land decreases leading to gradual desertification of the *Dongers*. At the same time during the winter due to drastic decline in temperature it gives drying effect damaging the winter crops that in turn adversely affect the productivity.

Accordingly the crops have shown to react negatively to climate change declining the per capita yield. Amongst them the productivity of pulses has reduced. The vegetable cultivation is not as worthy as earlier for the productivity does not match with the input cost. The basic food crop, finger millet, is the most vulnerable out of all the crops cultivated. If we take the example of the ginger production, around a decade ago, people say that the yield used to be seven to eight quintals from a small patch of land measuring around half an acre. While now that has been reduced to hardly to four to five quintals. Similar is the case with the other horticultural products. Though the quantity of pineapple production has increased (mainly due to more coverage of area for plantation), but the quality has drastically reduced. People complain that the water content and sweetness is not as the earlier ones. The taste has vanished and not as before. Another aspect of the climate change impact is the timing. While the the cycle of *poduchash* has been normal in general, the sowing period, hoeing and harvesting time have been found to be fluctuating. Some deviations have been noticed by the people.

Table 3: Deviations Found in Sowing and Reaping Periods

| Crops | Normal timing for sowing or field preparation | Deviations found |
|-----------|---|------------------|
| Turmeric | January/February | February/ March |
| Ginger | June/July | August |
| Pulses | May | July |
| Pineapple | May/June (harvesting) | July/August |

Perception of Dongrias towards a sustained agro-productivity and various constraints:

The *Dongria* youths perceive that poor extension services on climate change risk management, non-availability of drought tolerant, lack of access to weather forecasting technology and poor reliability on it, dependence on monsoons were the major institutional and technological constraints. The whole of *Niyamgiri* hills fall under the rain fed zone. But rain fed agriculture is risky, vulnerable, diverse, complex and under-invested (NRAA, 2012). The undivided KBK (Kalahandi-Bolangir-Koraput) districts of Odisha have historically been prone to drought-conditions being situated as rain-shadow interiors of Eastern Ghats, therefore devoid of adequate rainfall. Following are some of the major constraints faced by the *Dongrias* in different aspects of their livelihood.

- Extension services:** *Dongrias* have poor access to formal state government extension services like Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) or informal institutions like private input traders, non-profit organizations etc. The DKDA officials are not from KVK deputies or specialists in agriculture/horticulture. Rather they belong to the Odisha Welfare Services (OWS) cadre. Though government earlier used to appoint Assistant Agriculture Officer (AAO) as Special Officer (SO) of DKDA to better guide the people the related to agro-matters, but they proved to be insufficient either due to lackluster outlook of officers or lack of enthusiasm of the people. Also dearth of staff is a continuing hindrance to the service of the people. Further, there is lack of coordination found between extension services functionaries and the DKDA officials. Thus poor understanding of climate risk management and transferring need full information to clientele by the extension personnel's is significant constraints in adaptation.
- Access to Information Source:** Farmers were facing limitations in adapting to climate change because of lack of information and its access on climate change, lack of suitable adaptation measures and credit shortage of land (Onyeneke and Madukwe 2010). The dissemination of weather information like rainfall conditions, credit information, improved varieties and management practices will play an important role in adapting different strategies to ecological changes.
- Non-availability of Institutional Credit:** Institutional credit with lowest interest charges compared to other unorganized lending sectors, i.e., *Dombs* in *Dongria* village settlements. Lack of finance hinders the cultivators from getting the necessary resources and technologies that facilitate adapting to climate change (Deressa et al 2008).
- Drought and pest tolerant varieties:** Cultivation of drought tolerant varieties is another measure, which farmers can adapt to reduce the risk of climate

vulnerabilities. It requires additional amount of inputs and credits.

- Lack of Access to Weather Forecasting Information:** Ravi Shankar et al (2011) and Idrisi et al (2012) noticed that absence of location specific climate forecasting followed by poor reliability and failure of the climate failures, coupled with poor extension services on climate prediction, forecasts in media not answering operational needs and low convictions of climate prediction were major problems reported by the farmers. While *Dongrias* largely rely for weather information on their indigenous knowledge.
- Shifting of Cropping Pattern:** Sudden shift in the cropping pattern in a short duration of time due to climate vulnerabilities is very difficult. Also the shifting from one crop to others involves extra resources in terms of finance and inputs (Satish Kumar et al, 2013). Further, the shifting of cropping pattern makes the farmers more vulnerable as in the era of globalization, cropping pattern is decided by the market conditions and people had to follow it.

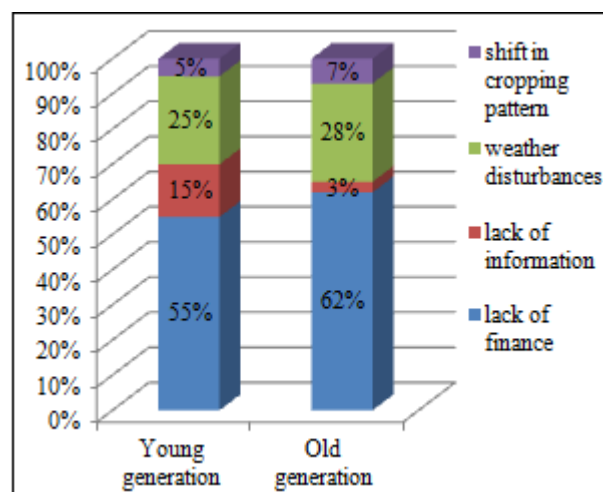


Figure 3: Perception of people on major constraints of agro-productivity

The youths believe that revenues from sales of agricultural products increase only with increased precipitation. They emphasize upon crop diversification. Some even experimented in new areas such as: using different dates for sowing, planting different crops with different varieties. Youths perceive that soil fertility management may help them against climate variability and change. Some know the new scheme of 'Soil Health Card'. Those doing terrace cultivation and horticulture perceive that use of certain chemicals can improve their adaptation capacity vis-à-vis changing nature of climate. They use the cow dung as manure. Some educated youths think that proper water management strategies helped irrigate the rice cultivation in the foothills as well as in the middle reaches of the hill ranges.

Perception on Naxalism, Bauxite Mining, the FRA, 2006 and the Environment Referendum, 2013:

It was found that the people perceived that the *Naxals* had a forceful authority over them. *Dongrias* don't want the presence of the *Naxals* for it is against their freedom of free movements throughout the hill ranges of *Niyamgiri*, spanning

over 250 sq. km. However, they support indirectly and directly the cause of *Naxalism* because of the apparent threat to their life and culture due to the *Vedanta* bauxite mining in the *Niyamgiri* hills, believed to be one of the largest reserves of bauxite ores in the country. A kind of fear psychosis has evolved among the *Dongrias* since a habitant of the *Khambesi* village, who happens to be an MPW (multi-purpose worker) of DKDA, was kidnapped in 2011. Now the villagers are quite vigilant over any news regarding *Vedanta* mining project. According to some people, *Naxals* work on behalf of the *Vedanta* and the government to siphon off some lands to the mining project and some conspiracies between some locals and the *Naxals* against the *Dongrias*. This brings the reality that the *Dongrias* and other native inhabitants are not living symbiotically, which has been cited in many researches. In case of the *Dongrias* the *Naxals* are the stumbling block to their livelihood, mainly in the interior areas. People have to part something to them from their earnings - either in earning or cash. One villager wondered that "had there not any *Naxal* they would have been moved freely throughout the length and breadth of the hills but yes they would have been thrown out of their

BhitaMatee (home land) by the government for *Vedanta* Aluminium Company".

July 18 to August 19, 2103 will go down in the history of India for hosting the country's first environment referendum, affecting 112 villages in the *Niyamgiri* hills. All the twelve Panchayats rejected the joint verification report prepared by the state govt. which wanted to settle community claims in bits and pieces around forest villages under Forest Rights Act, 2006 before the dates of Panchayats. Because the forest dwellers were asked about cultivation plots, water resources, places of worship, grazing grounds and cremation grounds that are scattered around the village and stretches faraway into the hills. Basing on that the report claims the community forest rights of the villagers were settled while the religious and cultural rights were settled based on local deities, within a mere 0.11 acres and the supreme deity, the *NiyamRaja* is relegated to a mere temple, which the *Dongrias* perceive as their source of sustenance, their ancestral kin and the protector and keeper of the forests, further claiming that no villagers demanded any further rights.



Figure 4: Map showing the proposed Vedanta mining in the *Niyamgiri* hills

Regarding community rights, little inside the *Niyamgiri* hills is owned as personal property – the seeds, fruits, wild nuts etc, the entire forests are owned by the community. The rights of the community extending over the dense swathes of *Niyamgiri* is essentially fluid, a reality sorely missed by the state. The angry *Dongrias* voice that the Revenue Inspectors, Welfare Extension Officers, forest officials duped them into signing the verification report which give less than acre (0.04 ha) of a forest stream or 15 ha on a hill slope. they perceive that the entire process of preparing joint verification reports of community claims is illegal. As per the FRA 2006, it's the village forests rights community FRC who will verify all claims on forest land. the govt role is assist FRC not to prepare a report its own to settle the claim.

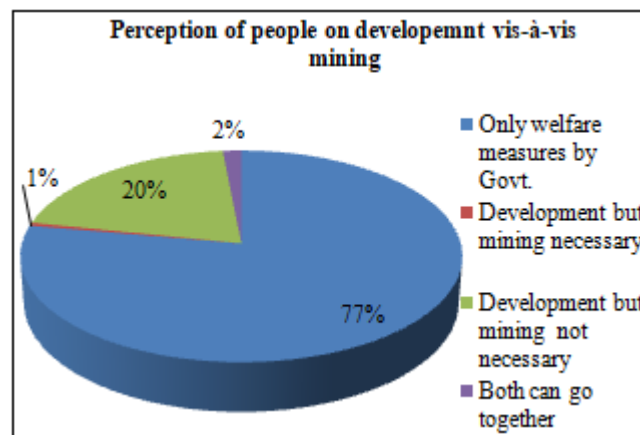


Figure 5: Perception of *Dongrias* on the need of mining in the area

The name *Vedanta*, says an old woman, is itself a blasphemy. It has become a demon-like thing. Every

Dongria perceives that if *Vedanta* becomes a reality they would turn to a stage of paperized. They will have to leave the land, their *bhita matee*, which they hold since generations and it is their everything- their father, mother, forefathers, *Devta* and the almighty, the *Niyamraja*.

Many people view that there is a direct and intimate relation between the *Barsha* (the rain) and the bauxite inside the *Dharani* (the earth). Bauxite or *Gundwali* as called in *Kuibrings* rain to the surface and quenches the thirst of the *Dharani Penu*. And then it produces the different crops and vegetables for their very survival. However it needs to be experimented scientifically whether any connection happens to be operating between the two. As per the *Dongria* mythology the *Niyamraja* ordered the fellow *Dongrias* not to desert their mother land for the sake of *Niyamraja* himself. Else he would desert the *Dongrias*. And without the *Niyamraja*, their originality and existence are nothing. As responded by the people, the *Vedanta* company provided funding to build roads along steep slopes of the *Niyamgiri* hill ranges. It financed a part to the special purpose vehicle (SPV) for the development of the *Niyamgiri* High School, situated at *Chatikona* where *Dongria* boys study.

Table 3: Convergence under F.R.A, 2006 (DKDA, 2015).

| | | |
|----|--|---------------|
| 1 | Total no. of villages | 64 |
| 2 | Total household | 1444 |
| 3 | Number of gram <i>Panchayats</i> covered | 05 |
| 4 | Proposals received by FRC | 1460 |
| 5 | Claims rejected at FRC level | 29 |
| 6 | Cases pending with FRC | 51 |
| 7 | Proposals approved by FRC send to SDLC | 1380 |
| 8 | Cases send to DLC | 1380 |
| 9 | Titles deeds issued | 1363 |
| 10 | Area covered | 3557.30 acres |

Perception of the older generation on the breakdown of the nature-man-spirit complex (Vidyathi, 1963):

When asked about the current change in the environment and all the socio-economic hindrances like diseases, low agricultural productivity, forest fires, natural disasters etc, the older generation reiterated that it's because of the imbalances created, wittingly or unwittingly, by the people mainly, the youths. The imbalances not only manifested in the religious world but also in the natural and other socio-cultural world. They cite one example. Till now majority of the old people consume cow and buffalo meat which are sacrificed in the name of god and in the secular gatherings. It should be mentioned that the *Meriah* festival of the *Dongrias* were stopped by the British and the sacrifice of man was replaced by the buffalo. Thus eating buffalo is pious for the *Dongrias*. Some even say that consuming buffalo is good for health and safeguards from many diseases. Further they have thirteen major parvas in twelve months and in every occasion they have to at least sacrifice something and have to eat that as *Prasad* (holy food offered to god and part of that to be consumed). Thus reviewing this they manage for a buffalo that costs around Rs.10000 to 12000 while a goat will cost approximately Rs.4000 to 5000. While the buffalo could feed the whole village the goat could not. In contrast to this the majority of youths don't prefer to eat buffalo/cows or pigs or peigons which they

think not to be consumed. It has its sound reasons. First of all, as they are partially becoming educated (they are learned in the text books that cow is '*gomata*'). So eating this will be a sin. And they are being taught that consuming bovine population is not good for health as it contains more fat than chickens or muttons), they hesitate to eat it. They regard others as backward and of orthodox mentality who eat buffalos or pigs. This behaviour of not eating buffalo or pig attracts the wrath of the old people. They often complain about the effect of the plain dweller and even the impact of education. Thus, the social structural system get broken down that affects other aspects of elements of the socio-cultural phenomena.

Another example of this breakdown of the nature-man-spirit complex is the ill-doing by the new generation. Now-a days the intercaste marriage and intra-gotra marriage have been in increase. Often the *Dongrias* are found to elope with *Dombs* who they think as lower caste and don't receive even water from them. So there is no question of marital tie between these two communities. Even they don't bring proposals from the plain *Kondhs* who are the closest to them. Because they perceive that they are distinct and should not take or give their women to other communities. But the young population don't pay attention to these factors. Further, rather than the intercaste marriage, the *Dongrias* treat the intra-gotra or same gotra marriage as more blasphemous as members of the same clan are considered to be brothers and sisters. Hence, all these are highly looked down upon by the older generation thinking that these anger the gods and the ancestors. Therefore the religious and the spiritual entity world becomes envy of the community and instead of the pleasings and blessings they give curse.

Similarly in the environment sphere the youths, the old think, destroy the originality and vitality of the mother earth. For this reason the sun gets angry and heats up the *Dharani* (the earth) more than usual. The rain god does not get pleased and stop raining. The *Donger Devta* reduces the crop amount productivity. The *Gangi Dev* reduces the flow of water. The *Jatrajudi Devi* gives regular diseases of measles, chickenpox etc. Now-a-days, some people too don't perform rituals like sacrifices before the start of shifting cultivation.

The youths, on the other hand, complain that the old people, because of their conservatism and uncompromising attitude, are pulling their legs in attempting something new. For example if a *Dongria* youth wants to establish a new venture, his father would not allow him to pursue that and instead compel him to engage in the *Donger*. Further they raise the voice that the shying attitude of their elderly has a direct bearing upon the society and themselves. One youth held that because of this very nature, they have been exploited by the *Dombs* and the outsiders. The not-coming-forward of the old generation has made them limited to think about the wider world. Thus they think they don't get proper exposure.

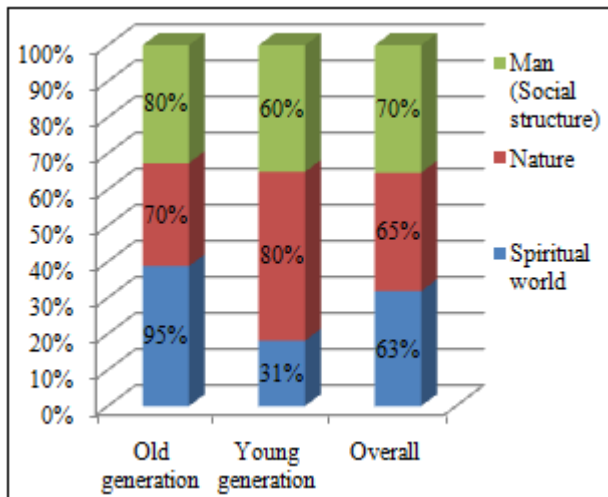


Figure 6: Perception of people in the of break-down of nature-man-spirit complex

Perception of people to developmental activities taken by Govt.:

The tribal development approach has undergone several changes in successive plan periods according to the need and priority of development from the community development blocks resulting into tribal development blocks to ITDA under TSP to MADA to Micro projects for the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) who are considered as a special category in view of their distinctly different social, cultural and occupational practices and traits. During the Fifth Five Year Plan it was decided by the Government of India to plan and implement specific programs focused on all-round development of the PVTGs. Two micro projects i.e., *DongriaKondh* Development Agency (DKDA) were established, one at Chatikana (Kurli) and the other at Parsali. The DKDA (Kurli), Chatikana was established in the year 1978 and. People believe that this agency has come of age to secure and safeguard their lives from poverty and hunger. However a lot has to be done by the Govt. to further the developmental progress, especially the various projects that eye on their overall improvement of health, wealth, education, livelihood sources etc. There is mile to go from the present scenario where they stand today.

5. Summary and Conclusion

The above discussion shows that the people have a deep sense of concern to shifting cultivation which is not only the means of earning the living but also the means of life and livelihood. They are simultaneously being affected by the global climate change. However the most significant aspect to highlight here is that the deterioration of the age-old practices which the old generation always emphasizes while the youths have wished to come out of the webs of shifting cultivation who in the perception of the old people are becoming dependent upon others whereas the *Dongrias* boasts of independence, in the sense of life and self-reliance, in the sense of economic activities. There is ambiguity existing toward the issue of *Naxalism* but all accept them fearing the *Vadanta* mining for no one wants to lose their "*Bhittamatee*". Regarding the claiming of community rights, it may involve bringing in all the Gram Sabhas and tribal clans together to map the customary boundaries and pass a joint resolution to validate the claims which the

*Juang*s have completed in 2010 and claimed 2500 sq km in the iron-rich Keonjhar district though it's still pending (Bera, 2015a). Considering the very perceptions of the *Dongrias*, the policy measures should be initiated that will go a long way in people centric and people initiated interventions.

The *Dongrias* have been found to migrate seasonally for livelihoods. Majority of the migrants responded ambiguously because migration has helped manage as an alternative livelihood with its own dark sides. Some cases of adulteries increase in those families where the men migrates. In the absence of the male household heads, false marriages, sexual and verbal harassment against women etc. are becoming common. As men migrate women can not arrange sufficient labour for agricultural activities. Some youths even responded that though they went outside for work, they left their hearts in the villages. The interpretation of it is that they do not find a familiar ambience at the workplaces and they miss their families at festive occasions, especially during *Meriah* festival. They also say that they can not take care of their parents.

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