Chapter 4

LOCATING VILLAGE, SCHOOL AND COMMUNITIES

“Ame ta Kudumi Loka
Ame kodi khaibu
Ame kahaku hata pateibuni gande khaiba pain” (Odia version)

“We are Kudumi.
We will plough, produce food and will eat it
We never borrow from others to feed our stomach”

(Excerpt from an interview with an elderly person from Mahanta group)

The socio-cultural and physical space of ‘Kendukhori’ village in Kendujhar district is shared by four communities—namely Mahanta, Sounti, Munda and Santal. Each community has its own story of existence, culture and social practices unique to their identity. However, in the process of interaction with different social, economic and political institutions both within and outside the village, the members of communities have changed their occupational strategies, modes of interaction and patterns of education and socialisation. In order to understand the state of schooling and education of different communities in the village, it is important to understand the basic structure of the village and its economic, political and cultural aspects. This chapter locates the structure and organisation of the village. It focuses on describing the specificity of interactions and interdependence as well as differences among different communities with respect to various social, economic and political contexts in the village. The key aspects of the lives of different communities such as origins of the communities and socio-economic and political, religious beliefs and practices are discussed in this chapter, based on interviews with parents, children and elders of each of the communities, observations and secondary records. The chapter also seeks to present the educational context of the village. It describes the situation of schools located within the village, as well as schools and colleges located in nearby villages. This chapter has a particular focus on the functioning of primary schools. The norms, rituals, and various schooling practices are discussed in order to discern the various ways in which boundaries of culture and communities are drawn, interiorised and negotiated and how parents and children respond to these situations.
4.1. Kendukhori: Physical Structure and Organisation

‘Kendukhori’ village comes with in the district Kendujhar which is located at the northern part of Odisha, about 153 kilometres from the state capital Bhubaneswar. The exact location of this village is towards a block named Patna, straight down from the local market of Dhenkikote. The village spreads four to five kilometres on each side of a state highway No 49. The different communities, whose culture, economy and political representations are discussed here, are spread in areas on either side of the highway. The physical features of the village are characterised by groups of small hillocks and forests with semi-evergreen species of large trees like ‘sal’, ‘piasal’, ‘kurum’, ‘bandhan’, ‘gambhari’, ‘kendu’, ‘mahua’, ‘asan’ and ‘mango’. The forest is an integral part of all the communities living in the village. The village is structured with a common scene of agricultural land, muddy and paddy roads joining the scattered settlements, ponds and tube wells, small shops and three schools.

Map 4.1. Map of Kendukhori Village
Going from Dhenkikote to Patna block headquarters, one can find the schools on the both sides of the highway. The high school and upper primary school are near to each other, sharing a common boundary wall. Opposite these schools, and on the left side of the highway is the local primary school. These schools are established with the efforts of the villagers, who initially managed and supported financially. According to the classifications of the dwellings, one can find that they are settled in a discrete manner but the habitations are socially homogeneous in nature. Staying within the group gives people a sense of place identity and the regulation of identity, in particular, in residential areas. Place identity embodies those aspects of self-identity, which encompass and are reflected by the environment and its social and personal meanings (Checker 2005, Hunziker et. al.,2007, Korpela 1989; Proshansky et al. 1983). The adolescents draw their identity from the places where they are closely connected to each other and develop friendship relations. The observation at school and community reveals that some of the students are confined to a friend belonging to his/her habitation and continue to spend more time with him/her. Consequently, the residents within this settlement could only regulate and develop the social and collective aspects of their identity within the village, and not the individual aspects. The defined spaces in which community members limit and expand their social territory are not only the place of first socialisation but residents also have a relatively greater degree of control within their home area.

Close to the high school, there are some small shops at the roadside owned by Mahantas. This area is the location of bus stop where people take buses, taxis and autos to reach the district headquarters, state capital and nearby markets and towns. Beside the upper primary school, there are two mud roads, at a little distance from each other, joining the heart of the village from the highway. These are the routes for villagers to the outside world in their day to day life. The first lane leading to the village is a semi-concrete one. The sides of the road are covered with trees and bushes. This lane is not used by the common villagers as it is not the main entrance to the village. Another paddy road leads to the village centre and is mostly used by the villagers residing in this side for their daily activities. The entrance to this part of the village is made up of houses of the Sounti communities. There are 35 Sounti families staying in one settlement and most of the houses are built one attached to the other.

The main road to the village is bordered by agricultural fields of rice and pulses. The road extends throughout the village side with its sub-roads. The interiors parts of
this side are mainly occupied by the Mahanta people with their residential portions. There are 78 Mahanta households extended around both sides of concrete road. At some distance a small pond is surrounded by the agricultural fields. These fields are owned by people belonging to all the communities with their own shares. The Santal community resides in settlement at the corner of the village. There are 16 Santal households located in this part of the village. The different decorative dwellings and house organisation mark the socio-economic standard of different communities in the village.

The primary school and a large pond act as the location identifiers for visitors to the village. Adjacent to the school, there are some grocery shops and cycle repairing stores. The homes of the Munda communities in semi-circular formation, are in this location. There are around 18 Munda families staying in the village near the highway. Only few of these houses have boundary walls. These boundaries are fenced by bamboo sticks with small gates, located on the side of the neighbours. The presence of bamboo, neem and sal tree and the small pattern of bushes around the houses add to the scenic beauty of the village.

At a short distance from the Munda households and behind the primary school, the largest pond of the village is located, which has played the important role in the separation process among the different social groups. Different communities have made different small rock segments by the side of the pond called ‘Tutha’.

4.2. Home Space and Boundary

All the houses in the village are one storey structures. Most of the houses owned by Mahanta and Sounti groups are constructed of cement and brick with a wide garden

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7 Tutha is a place identified by the people in a shore of the pond where the people take bath, wash clothes and sometimes, they use for ritual purposes.
at the front or back and with drinking water facilities. The habitations have concrete roads. The description of home space and boundary of each of the communities are discussed in this section mainly to emphasise how the spaces within the household are used particularly for social interaction, among members and also the educational and recreational spaces for children.

Photo: One of Mahanta habitation

Most of the houses belong to the Mahantas have two to three rooms and even more if they have joint families. Unlike Mundas, they have a courtyard and a veranda surrounded by boundary walls. The veranda is used for storing rice and food grains as well as appliances used for agricultural work at one corner of the Veranda. Apart from one or two bedrooms, there is a separate kitchen space and at a certain distance from the kitchen, there are mud chullahs for cooking food. The verandah which is attached to the main room used as studying space for children if a study room is not available. The courtyard, located at the centre of the house is used as a multipurpose space, sometimes for drying food grain in the sun and at times, by children to play.

The houses of Sountis are located 100 metres from the highway. These houses are located close to each other and in a row. In front of each household, there is a ‘tulasi chaura’. Tulsi is considered as a holy plant and is worshipped as ‘Brunda Debi’. The
tulsi chaura is found in Mahanta and Sounti homes. These are worshipped by pouring water in the morning and offering of diyas in the evening.

Photo of  Sounti habitation

The place which is located in between the two houses facing each other is called ‘danda’ (avenue), more than just a road connecting people to state highway. The danda is being used for social gatherings among communities, drying of paddy, storing firewood and as a parking area for vehicles.

Inside the home of the Mahantas and Sountis, there is a central courtyard, which has both social and religious appeal. The existence of central courtyard provides the space for many religious festivals and rituals. For example, Laxmipaada Chita or the ‘foot of Laxmi’ are drawn inside the body of the Jhoti\(^8\) in central courtyard to call goddess Laxmi from the door to the inside of the house. The courtyard is also used for keeping the adjacent rooms cool. People sit in the courtyard to get sunlight in the winter. It is also used for meeting held between family members, relatives and community members.

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\(^8\)During the auspicious occasion of Laxmi puja in the month of Margasira, the mud walls and floors are decorated with murals in white rice paste or ‘pithau’. They are called ‘jhoti’ or ‘chita’ and are drawn not merely with the intention of decorating the house, but to establish a relationship between the mystical and the material.
The habitation belong to the Santal community is located at the end of the village. Their houses are made up of mud and there are only two rooms inside and a small verandah. There is a yard in front of the house with a boundary, which is used as a sitting space. Paddy husk is stored here and chullahs are used for cooking. During summer, they also sleep in the open space. Most of the Munda families have one room houses except one or two families, who have two rooms. The single room is divided into three sections. The central part of the room is used for sitting and sleeping.
Sometimes, the space is used for studying by school going children. One corner of the room is used for storing wood, food grains and utensils, while the other corner is used for keeping storage basket/box and storing clothes in a trunk. Appliances required for agricultural work are also kept in the room. A rope is used for hanging the clothes.

4.3. Origin of Communities and Social Hierarchies

Each community staying in village carries their own historiographies. This history of origin provides a distinct and separate identity to that group. Among the four groups, the Sountis are said to be the first inhabitants of the village, followed by the Mahantas, Santals and Mundas. Mahantas claim that they brought Mundas and Santals to the village. Based on different secondary documents and discussion with the elders of the village, the different stories associated with the origin of different communities are presented in this section.

The Sountis are numerically very small compared to other tribal groups in Odisha. The large segments of Sounti population are found in Kendujhar and Mayurbhanj districts. There are different stories associated with the origin of the Sounti tribe. The census report of 1931 states that the tribe ‘Sounti’ took its origin from one Jayagovind Das of Puri, one of the coastal district of Odisha. According to O’Malley (1910), “the nucleus of this tribe belongs to outcaste from respectable group of people”. Their number grew up as the households from other categories were also widely accepted as the member of the caste. But the only criteria set for the caste membership is that they must belong to some caste, from whom the Brahmin should accept water (Tripathy, 2004).

Tripathy (2004) discusses that Sountis trace their origin from Uttar Pradesh. In the past, when the king of Kendujhar, Purushottama Bhanja returned after a victory in a war, Gobinda Bhanja had given [Goddess] Tarini to the king. They decided to arrange a great yagnya [fire sacrifice] for the greatly extended kingdom. But for all these rituals, they didn’t find Brahmins nearby, with no other option; the king decided to bring some Brahmins from Uttar Pradesh and sent his messenger for this purpose. But the kings of Uttar Pradesh deny the offer on the ground that some other caste should follow the Brahmins to serve them otherwise it is not possible to send Brahmins. The King of Kendujhar agreed with their proposal and some other caste households followed Brahmins to settle in Odisha to help them for observation of Yagnya. When the king

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asked them about their origin of their descent, they answered that they came from here and there. Thus, the king renamed them as ‘Sounti’, meaning ‘gathered in’ and ordered the people to call them in that same name. The king offered them some land to settle in the district. With the changing time, they moved to different parts of the district to fulfil their changing requirements (Tripathy, 2004). Now the question arises with regard to the validity of these arguments. While the former information collected about the group was the product of census report in 1931, the latter one is a collection of myth stories of origin of Sountis collected from the people of the present generation by Tripathy (2004). Further, no sign of north Indian form, neither any form of cultural practices like languages, food habits and rituals nor any other ethnic enclave of any north-Indian form is found in them. Even they don’t claim themselves that they came from another region. On the other hand, from generations to generations, they follow the same practices, rituals and festivals as the Hindus of Odisha. Perhaps, this is the reason for which one can say that the former origin myth about the Sountis is more appropriate than the later.

‘Mahanta’ migrated to the Kendujhar district and also to adjacent Mayurbhanj district in the last half of 18th century. Mahantas are known as Kurri, Kudumi and Mahatos in other parts of India. In the Mayurbhanj Census 1931 (Volume-I) Kudumis have been mentioned as descendants of a Dravidian stock. In various documents, it is mentioned that Kudumi was declared as tribe up to 1931 by the then British Government (Lacey, 1933). The famous ethnologist Dalton had classified the Kurmis as an agricultural tribe. Risley stated them as belonging to a Dravidian stock (Lacey, 1933: Volume-III, Page-95). In 1941, in 1941, they were declaring as ‘tribal Hindus’ in Mayurbhanj and as ‘Kshatriyas’ in other areas. But later on, they were excluded from the list of Scheduled Tribes as part of (Scheduled Tribes) Order,1950, based on the recommendation of the advisory committee on Fundamental Rights, Minorities and Tribal and Excluded areas, formed in 1946, (Mahato,2008: Page 108).

No doubt, Kudumis were a tribal community in the past but motivated by the reformative movements for upward mobility in caste hierarchy by some segments of Mahanta population and greater assimilation in the Hindu social system after independence, and in view of their present socio-cultural progress, they were accorded

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status within the dichotomy of caste system. Now, they are demanding for inclusion of
the ‘Kudumi Tribe’ in the Scheduled Tribe list\(^\text{12}\)(Pioneer,2016).

Kudumis are not original inhabitants of Odisha and they are immigrants from
neighbouring regions of Mainbhum, Singbhum, Birbhum and Purulia during
1848(Mishra, 1939). In Sundargarh Gazetteer, they are mentioned as migrants from
Ranchi and Madhya Pradesh (1975: IOS). They approached these areas by keeping an
affable relationship with the Sountis, who are the original inhabitants of that area.
Their number grew up as they invited their families and friends to settle down with
them. Gradually, they tried to spread their hold by occupying inhabited land and
forests. Thereafter, they settle themselves in agriculture, trade and business prior to the
Sounti group of households. As a result, Mahantas acquired more control over land than
the other groups.

Munda people settled in the village after Mahantas came to the village. Munda people came to this village in search of job opportunities. At first, there were only two families and now there are 18 families.

Discussions with villagers also reveal that Mahantas invited Santals to settle in
the village. Mahantas consider that Santals and Mahantas as communities are
considered to have the mutual fraternal relation since histories as the messages have
been transmitted from their ancestors. Risley (1891) also discussed “The Santals
consider the Kurmis as his half-brother begotten by the same father on two mothers
(Mahato, 2008, Roy Choudhury, 1964). Mahanta people believe that Santal people are
helpful by nature and the presence of Santal people is blessing in disguise for them. If
there is any crisis, Santal people guide and suggest measures. These motives persuaded
the present generation of people belonging to Mahanta group to maintain good relations
with Santals.

The different histories about the origin of these different groups symbolises
verities of social values attached with them, which influence their relationship.
Mahantas came to the village in pursuit of social and economic interest and they are
now dominant in social and economic domain. On the other hand, Mundas are invited

to the village by Mahantas to support them in the work connected with purity and pollution. Thus, historiography, either consciously or unconsciously bestows a distinct identity within the hierarchy of subordination and super-ordination between each community. Mahantas look down Mundas as inferior to them and view Sountis as their competitor in the struggle for social and economic power.

4.4. Demographic Profile

There are 171 households in ‘Kendukhori’ village and the total population recorded is 915 as per the household census conducted as part of the study. Of the total population, Mahantas constitute 59.56 per cent of the total population. On the other hand, Scheduled Tribes, which include Sountis, Santals and Mundas, constitute to be 40.44 per cent of the total population (Table 4.1). The average household size in the village is 5.28 and among Mahanta community, the average household size is 5.34 among tribal population.

Table 4.1: Distribution of Population by Social Group and Gender in Kendukhori Village

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Total Households</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OBCs</td>
<td>102(60.35)</td>
<td>283(58.47)</td>
<td>262(62.2)</td>
<td>545(59.56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribe</td>
<td>69(39.65)</td>
<td>201(41.53)</td>
<td>169(100)</td>
<td>370(40.44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>171(100)</td>
<td>484(100)</td>
<td>431(100)</td>
<td>915(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Figures in the bracket indicate %)

Table 4.2: Distribution of Population among Scheduled Tribes in Kendukhori

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scheduled Tribes</th>
<th>Total Household</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Munda</td>
<td>18(26.09)</td>
<td>41(20.4)</td>
<td>39(23.07)</td>
<td>80(21.62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santal</td>
<td>16(23.19)</td>
<td>55(27.36)</td>
<td>57(33.72)</td>
<td>112(30.27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sountis</td>
<td>35(50.72)</td>
<td>105(52.24)</td>
<td>73(43.19)</td>
<td>178(48.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>69(100)</td>
<td>201(100)</td>
<td>169(100)</td>
<td>370</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Village Census

There are 69 ST households and majority of them are Sountis, constituting of 48.1 per cent of the total tribal population in the village. On the other hand, the population of the Munda and Santals taken together constitute half (i.e. 51.9 per cent) of the total tribal population in the village. No doubt, the number of families among Munda Tribe are more in number than Santals but the household size being small, the Munda population is less than Santals. The population of Munda is only 80(18 families)
while Santals are only 16 families and their population is only 112. Mundas make up 21.62 per cent of the total tribal population, while Santals constitute 30.27 per cent (Table 4.2).

4.5. Sources of Livelihood

In this section, the source of livelihood of villagers is discussed based on the village census done by the researcher. Of all the groups in the village, Mundas are most affected by poverty. As high as 94.4 per cent of the Munda families earn less than Rs. 20,000 per annum and a large proportion of Munda population in the village are in a state of chronic poverty. 68.8 present of Santals belong to this category as compared to 50.5 per cent in case of Sountis and 28.4 per cent in case of Mahantas. The number of tribal families which come under higher income group is also very few. None of the Munda families have earnings more than Rs 30,000 per annum. Only 3 out of 16 Santal families i.e. 18.8 per cent of Santal families are earning more than Rs. 40,000 per annum. On the other hand, 43.1 present of Mahanta families and 31.4 per cent of Sounti families have the annual income more than Rs. 40,000 per annum. This show Mundas, followed by Santals and Sountis are deeply influenced by poverty than the non-tribal group in the village (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3: Social Group Wise Family Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Group</th>
<th>Annual Income (In Rupees)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Below 10000</td>
<td>10000-20000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munda</td>
<td>6(33.3%)</td>
<td>11(61.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santal</td>
<td>2(12.5%)</td>
<td>9(56.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sounti</td>
<td>6(17.1%)</td>
<td>11(31.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahanta</td>
<td>5(4.9%)</td>
<td>24(23.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19(11.1%)</td>
<td>55(32.2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Village Census

The distribution of landholdings shows that most of the Mundas have landholdings of less than one acre, followed by Santals and Sountis. There are 94.4 per cent of Munda families with land holdings of less than one acre whereas 50 per cent of the Santal families and 34.3 per cent of Sounti families subsist on less than one acre of land. Only 7.8 per cent of Mahanta families belong to this category. Having less land in their pockets, many Munda and Santal families find very challenging to sustain their everyday life (Table 4.4).
### Table 4.4: Social Group Wise Distribution of Landholdings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Group</th>
<th>Below 1 Acre</th>
<th>1-2 Acre</th>
<th>2-3 Acre</th>
<th>3-4 Acre</th>
<th>More than 4 Acre</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Munda</td>
<td>17 (94.4%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (5.6%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>18 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santal</td>
<td>8 (50.0%)</td>
<td>2 (12.5%)</td>
<td>3 (18.8%)</td>
<td>2 (12.5%)</td>
<td>1 (6.3%)</td>
<td>16 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sounti</td>
<td>12 (34.3%)</td>
<td>69 (17.1%)</td>
<td>11 (31.4%)</td>
<td>1 (2.9%)</td>
<td>5 (14.3%)</td>
<td>35 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahanta</td>
<td>8 (7.8%)</td>
<td>40 (39.2%)</td>
<td>28 (27.5%)</td>
<td>3 (2.9%)</td>
<td>23 (22.5%)</td>
<td>102 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>45 (26.3%)</td>
<td>48 (28.1%)</td>
<td>43 (25.1%)</td>
<td>6 (3.5%)</td>
<td>29 (17.0%)</td>
<td>171 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Village Census

### Table 4.5: Social Group Wise Major Occupation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Group</th>
<th>Manual Causal Labour</th>
<th>Agriculture</th>
<th>Business</th>
<th>Salaried job</th>
<th>Driving</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Munda</td>
<td>9 (50%)</td>
<td>9 (50.0%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santal</td>
<td>4 (25%)</td>
<td>8 (50%)</td>
<td>1 (6.3%)</td>
<td>3 (18.8%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sounti</td>
<td>1 (2.9%)</td>
<td>22 (62.9%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12 (34.3%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahanta</td>
<td>2 (2.0%)</td>
<td>59 (57.8%)</td>
<td>8 (7.8%)</td>
<td>18 (17.6%)</td>
<td>15 (14.7%)</td>
<td>102 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16 (9.4%)</td>
<td>98 (57.3%)</td>
<td>9 (5.3%)</td>
<td>33 (19.3%)</td>
<td>15 (8.8%)</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Village Census

Most of the people across the social groups depend on agriculture for their survival. Agriculture is the principal source of income for most of the people belonging to Mahanta and Sounti community. Unlike Munda and Santals, most of Sountis and Mahantas have more than 1-2-acre size of landholdings, which help them to produce adequate food grains to meet daily life needs. Six of the Mahanta households have tractors. Most of them have a pair of bullocks and use chemical fertilisers as per the requirement and time needs. Those who do not have bullock carts, are able to manage from others in their community through their social networks. The family members work on their own land but they rarely work as labourers on other’s land. Mahantas with small families or incapable of engaging labourer also ask their school going boys and girls to contribute in the harvesting periods. However, the increase in wages, incapacity to pay the labour cost and further perception of low return from agriculture pushes them to invest in their community networks and collaborate in agricultural labour and production. They help each other by mutual exchange of labour.
Mahantas have larger size of landholdings than other social groups in the village. 14.7 per cent of Mahanta households have land holdings of more than 4 acres of land while no one in other community have such large holdings (Table 4.4). Mahantas managed to acquire more land by shifting to forest lands. It helps them to have access to more agricultural land and thus, they are able to manage more agricultural production.

One elderly Mahanta shared, “Initially the Mahanta families settled in one habitation. But the people belong to our community moved gradually from one place to other in the village where they find the place is suitable for better cultivation. Mahantas cleared the jungle and stay near the canal so that the paddy cultivation can get water as required.”

Although Mahantas have adequate landholdings, some of them are unable to cultivate all the lands partly due to unavailability of casual labourer and relatively small family size. In paddy cultivation, there are certain stages like transplanting, weeding and harvesting where there is a heavy demand of labour. Some families also leased out their land to other communities since it is difficult for them to cultivate all the lands partly because they do not have much human resources to cultivate the land. For example, Bhagirathi Mahanta leased one acre of land to a Munda, who was his classmate when he was studying in primary school. Lease land is given on contract basis. The tenant is expected to bear all the cost of cultivation but is required to give some commonly agreed amount of paddy to the landowner.

Apart from the engagement for raising food crops, Mahantas and Sountis are also engaged in cultivating vegetables. Most of the people belonging to Mahanta and Sounti communities produce cash crops and a surplus of food grain. Four Mahanta households have opened grocery shops and general stores, which meet the daily requirements of people living in the village. Further, some Mahantas and Sountis who are in the business of vegetable production sell the vegetables in the weekly market. On Saturdays, they go to Dhenkikote for the weekly market, which is situated at a distance of 10 km from the village. On Wednesdays, they go to weekly market at Patna, which is same distance from the village. Some Mundas sell chickens in the market. Some of the Santal and Munda families sell rice beer in the weekly market. Among the Mahantas, those who have relatively less landholding are also engaged in various non-farm activities like working as drivers and helpers. 14.7 per cent of Mahanta households are dependent upon driving as their major source of income in addition to their dependence.
on agriculture. Most of them are working in Joda\textsuperscript{13} and Barbil\textsuperscript{14} as drivers. Before the government’s decision to transport all the minerals through train in May 2012, heavy trucks were used for transportation of minerals, connecting Paradeep and Barbil via the Kendukhori village. Some of Mahantas worked as helpers and then, rose to become drivers. Many young Mahantas choose this option of driving as their occupation to earn income from a young age. They start out as tractor drivers in the village and once they feel confident, they go to Joda and Barbil. People from their community working in these towns help them to get driving jobs in the companies. Some of them are also working in the construction related works in nearby villages the engagement of Mahantas as drivers and helpers has decreased after the opening of railway line between Paradeep to Barbil.17.6 per cent of the Mahanta households have major occupation as salaried jobs in addition to their income from agriculture. (Table 4.5). There are also instances of successful personality among Mahanta community who are retired Army personnel, teachers and headmasters from the locality.

Among the Sountis, 62.9 per cent of households are dependent on agriculture as their major source of income compared to 34.3 per cent of Sounti households, whose major source of income is salaried job (Table 4.5). Some of them are doctors, teachers and are in defence services, acting as role models for their group members. Recently, one of the Sounti persons, working as Project Coordinator in one of the non-governmental organisations after completing his MBA from Tamilnadu has become a role model for people among Sounti community and even among others in the village.

Munda and Santal families do not have much access to land. As evident in Table 4.4., 94.4 per cent of Munda households have landholdings of less than one acre against 50 per cent of the Santals having landholdings of less than 1 acre. In 50 per cent of Munda households and 25 per cent of Santal households, their main source of livelihood is manual casual labour (Table 4.5). They spend their time on cultivation on their own land but their dependence on agriculture hardly solves their problem of sustaining and feeding their families throughout year. They do not have sufficient infrastructural facilities for increasing agricultural yield. Most of them do not have a pair of bullocks and are not able to use labourers. Mundas and Santals use the support

\textsuperscript{13}Joda’s economy is mostly based on large-scale Steel producers, such as \textit{ESSAR Steel}, \textit{Tata Steel}, \textit{Jindal Steel} and \textit{SAIL}.

\textsuperscript{14}Barbil has the fifth largest deposit of iron ore and manganese ore in the world. is an industrialised town with a number of steel plants, iron ore pellet plants, ore crushers and mines.
of each other within their communities by way of mutual exchange of labour. For most of the Munda and Santal families, production from their own land is inadequate for sustenance for one or two months. They do not have other options except engaging themselves in manual casual labour within and outside the village. The village landholding structure, being less in size and more people dependent on it, thus, those who are landless or with meagre size of land, migrate to other areas for managing their livelihood. (Gupta, 2005).

During off-season, Santals and Mundas take up road construction work or brick work or migrate to nearby cities for manual work. Both husband and wife go for wage labour. The adolescents are also engaged in wage labour since it is very challenging to sustain their family by depending on the labour of husband and wife only. However, the availability of off-farm employment also drives local villagers to seek jobs outside their village because wage labour outside agriculture provides them better income. (Bhaskaran, 2011; Gupta, 2005; Ruthven and Kumar, 2002). Some Munda families migrate to adjacent districts to engage themselves in the work with higher wages, leaving their children in the hand of neighbours. Further, presence of stone crushers in the village also provided the villagers a scope for livelihood. Santal women also earn by preparing leaf plates and cups out of sal leaves and sell them in the local market. Rice beer (handia) is a very popular drink among the Santals and Mundas. The Munda and Santal women usually prepare handia out of fermented rice and sell it to supplement their income.

4.6. Pattern of Migration

Migration has become one of the increasingly prevalent livelihood strategies in the village. The nature of migration among different communities are discussed here to locate reasons behind migration and how remittances gained from migration add to their income, livelihood and social statesman families having fewer lands, even when the agricultural produce is insufficient to feed the family for a month, migrate in search of livelihood.

Some of the Mundas migrate to Jajpur, Panikoili and other areas, which are situated at a distance of about 100km distance from the village for a period of two to three months in a year. They return back once the work is over since there are often no elders in their families to look after their children. 27.8 per cent of the total Munda
families migrate in search of jobs compared to 6.3% of total Santals, 31.4% of Sountis and 11. % of Mahantas. Like Mundas, some of the Santals also migrate in search of wage work.

Table 4.6: Migration among Social groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Group</th>
<th>Migration</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munda</td>
<td>5(27.8%)</td>
<td>13(72.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santal</td>
<td>1(6.3%)</td>
<td>15(93.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sounti</td>
<td>11(31.4%)</td>
<td>24(68.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahanta</td>
<td>12(11.8%)</td>
<td>90(88.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29(17.0%)</td>
<td>142(83.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Village Census

The availability of labour within the household is a strong determinant of the likelihood to migrate (Deshingkar and Start, 2003). Having one extra member in the household increases the likelihood of migrating. Within the state, most of the Mahantas are working as drivers in Joda and Barbil area, as stated earlier. There are cases of migration outside the state among Mahanta and Sounti communities when there are more than two adult males in the home. One example is that of a Mahanta household, where two sons alternate in their trips to Bangalore for jobs. While last year the younger son, who discontinued his Bachelor’s degree in second year, went to Bangalore and worked as a security guard, he has returned home six months back for his marriage and now looked after the household and agricultural work. The elder son has gone to Bangalore and is engaged as store keeper in some other company. The younger son shared,

“We have limited landholdings and it is enough for one or two persons to manage the agricultural work. Most of the land being situated in the highlands and less scope for irrigation, there is less agricultural produce. Since arranging finances for my father’s illness and marriage of four sisters was the on top priority, there was pressure on our family and I went to Bangalore to do the job without any thought of continuing my education. I left my college education in between and went to Bangalore. I took up the job of a security guard for 8 years and my elder brother was taking care of the family and agriculture related
Some of the Sountis, particularly those families who have more than one male member, also migrate outside the state. There are young people who did not like to engage themselves in agriculture and prefer to work outside the state and earn money even though the income is meagre. One of the adults from the Sounti community has been working as a kitchen help in a student hostel in Tamil Nadu with a monthly salary of Rs 5000.00. His younger brother, who is studying in the first year of his graduation degree, also went to Tamil Nadu in search of a job without informing his family members leaving his studies mid-way. At the time of my fieldwork, he had just returned after one of his uncle intervened and coerced him to return and focus on his studies. People migrating to cities have both good and bad experiences. While production from agriculture help them to meet the daily life needs, Mahanta and Sounti families gain by the income from migration constructing their own houses and investing in children’s education. But some people in the village have bad experiences as well. One of the Mahantas shared:

“I went to Bangalore to do some work out of frustration after the marriage of my daughter since whatever financial resources available were spent. Even I have borrowed money from relatives and neighbours. But after two months, I decided to return home because I was not able to understand English, Hindi or Kannada and thus faced difficulties getting a suitable job. Wherever I got a job, I was unable to cope up due to lack of communication”.

The employment opportunities in the village being limited only to the field of agriculture for the vast majority of population, the space of the village does not provide the opportunity for self-sufficiency. Kendukhori village has become a site for the people in the village particularly among youth, which Jonathan Parry (2003, p.217) terms as an area of darkness – a “waiting room” from which one hopes to escape’. For many Mahanta and Sounti youth, once they get certain level of education, at least intermediate aspire to seek employment in Bangalore, Chennai and other metro cities. Peer networks and relatives also influence these decisions.

4.7. Family structure, Parenting Strategies and Socialisation

A village as a social unit is defined by its social and cultural boundary with everyday practices and actions performed by member of families and communities. These social practices observed by various communities or families shape the identity
of the people in the village. Just like any other social communities, these groups of people in the village are also associated with their own cultural values. There are clear cut differences among the communities with regard to the pattern of their family system. Most of the families in the village are nuclear in nature except some Mahanta families where the system of joint family is still practiced.

In a joint family, children get the scope to learn as there are many helping hands within the family and community. In the presence of elderly people, the children not only learn the attitude and dispositions to live in their community and outside world, but also get care and command which help in developing a disciplined attitudes in them. Parents use a number of strategies and behaviours including praise and corporal punishment to socialise the children.

The socialisation practices found to be varied among different communities and differences are visible within a small community. There is also evidence that the goals of socialisation and practices vary among people from different cultural groups (Hulei et al., 2006). Everyday routine activities were used as a parameter to explore the differences between social groups. In most of the Mahanta and Sounti families, daily activities and routines of the children are actively constructed by their parents. Mahanta parents believed strongly in home and school-based involvement and interact with the teachers and adopt necessary strategies to better the performance of their children. They closely monitor their children's friendships in order to protect children from falling in with undesirable groups.

In most of the Mahanta and Sounti families, parents often play the role of disciplinarian and help to perform certain activities in time. When the parents are not at home, the most elderly persons like grandparents or uncle or aunt, even they live separately, take care of the children. Apart from parents and family members, sometimes people in the neighbourhood also direct them if they find children are ‘misbehaving’ or engaged in activities, which do not conform to norms of the community. Children follow the commands of the elders in the community and rarely disobey them. They often take advice and guidance when they undertake any action and even when they go outside. The houses of Sountis and most of the Mahantas are located in rectilinear manner in habitations and there are also many common public spaces where both children and adults perform different activities. Thus, the children remain under observation of elders; the children also get the scope to learn from elders by
imitating them or through instruction. Friendship ties also play the role of socializing the children.

In Munda and Santal families, women accompany their husbands in labour works for extra earnings. The small children, who need the utmost care, are left with the older children and especially with the girl children. The absence of Munda parents throughout the day due to the compulsion of earning from wage labour for meeting daily needs of arranging food and going to bed early at night left little scope for interaction with their children. Further, Munda and Santal parents provide the scope of freedom to children to do whatever they like to do, which is embedded in the culture and value system of Munda and Santals. These dispositions and attitudes, provides the children scope to choose to be engaged in activities, which gives them more enjoyment such as fishing and roaming around the village/habitations. The children imitate their peer groups and siblings and largely learn from them. Parents do not approve of physical punishment to direct and control their children. One of the Munda parents shared,

“I cannot beat my child if he is not listening to me. He is going here and there and not studying at all. They are not cattle that I will tie them with ropes. They are free to do whatever they want to do. Destiny will take them to whatever it decides”.

In the Munda community, the girl child has to bear the load of child care and household. She is expected to remain at home with other siblings when both parents go out of home to do agriculture related work or migrate outside for short duration of work. Even among other communities, girls are socialised early into many of the household chores and assist their mothers in household tasks even when they attend school. The main purpose behind socializing them into household chore is towards management of domestic duties in the absence of their mothers and after marriage. Girls finds very little time for their personal affairs.

Sounti and Mahanta parents are more conscious about the education of their children. The parents start educating their children from the early age of 4 or 5. The family employs various strategies to arouse interest for studies among children in the early stage of life including making them learn alphabets and identifying and distinguishing objects through informal learning. These make the child to sit among the older children studying together in the household. Further, recently with the opening up
of pre-school opportunities in the area, some Mahanta families with better socio-economic standards choose to send an early age children to these pre-schools. Educated parents also socialise children into ideals of studies through stories and use of media such as radio and television. A Mahanta parent of a four-year child enrolled in nursery class shared,

“*My son has become used to watch cartoons in his free time. Once he found how people are flying on television and we focused on telling that if he focuses on studies and gets a good job, there are chances for him to fly in aeroplane*”.

For Santals and Mundas, parents neither fix ages for education nor do they pressurise their children for education and there is scope for freedom of their children to choose when they prefer to study. It is often the practice to send a younger child with an older sibling in school and once the parents find the child is interested in education, they give admission in school. Some of them send their children to the anganwadi centre operating in the village. However, there is little learning activities in the anganwadi centre. These practices Thus, the habitus, which formed through one’s early life experiences including family history, schooling experiences and early socialisation (Bourdieu and Passesron,1977) being differed by communities in the early stages also contribute to differences in schooling and educational experiences of children in the later stages. Because the tastes and preferences internalised in the early stages of life yields different patterns of practices for different social groups, differences are seen in future social outcomes, which ultimately helps to maintain the reproduction of social relations.

### 4.8. Linguistic Affinities and Differences

There are languages of two families, found in the village: Indo-Aryan and Austro-Asiatic, the former being more dominant than the latter. The Sounti and Mahantas speak in Odia language within family and in the group, although Mahantas claim that their mother tongue is Kurmali. Odia language belongs to Indo-Aryan group of languages. On the other hand, Mundas use Mundari language, in the home, though they are familiar with Odia. Santals use Santali in the home. Both Santali and Mundari belong to Austro-Asiatic language group of languages 15(Census of India, 2011).

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4.9. Kinship and Marriage

Differences in kinship and marriage are seen among the tribal and non-tribal group in the village. All the groups are endogamous as per the custom and tradition; the Munda boy and girl select their partners according to their choice and suitability. Munda parents offer more freedom to the girls or boys to interact and know each other. These relationships develop in course of interaction in social and economic activities. They play with each other, attend the festivals and fairs outside the village and also work on the land together.

Marriages among Mahanta and Sounti group, are more or less observed according to Hindu rites and ritual. It is seen as the moral as well as social duty of the parents that they should see their sons and daughters suitably married at the marriageable age. With the help of mediator, they search for mates for their son or daughter and also match their horoscope with the help of astrologers. There is prevalence of dowry system in both the groups. The system of widow remarriage is also practised among all the social groups.

Santal groups practice early marriage there is practice of early marriage. There are cases of marriage by elopement. One of the Santal parents shared, “Girls eloped at the age of 12-13. They don’t wait for a long period. If we see any good proposals, we also go after the proposal instead of waiting for the marriageable age of the child”.

4.10. Lifestyle

Each individual as well as the group has its own style of life. The lifestyle changes as the society undergoes changes. Lifestyle, in broad terms, includes marriage, customs and rituals etc. It also includes the food habits, dress, language and etiquette etc. As far as food habits are concerned, a Munda takes his/her meal thrice a day, in the morning, afternoon and in the evening. In the morning and evening, Mundas eat water-rice along with sag or dry fish and in the afternoon, rice with curry. The Tea and tiffin are not preferred in a Munda family. The more important fact is that Munda men and women consume home-brewed rice beer called ‘handia’ every evening and whenever they feel tired. On the other hand, liquor is totally forbidden in the Sounti community. In the past, it was considered as a social taboo among the Sountis and the person belong to the family consuming liquor was cast out of the village from the village. As far as Mahantas concerned, there are some old men, who often consume handia in evening although the practise among the youth is relatively low.
Handia is also very popular among the Santal men and women. During festivals and rituals. Santals, Mundas and Mohandas consume handia. Whenever any guests also come to their house, they prefer to serve handia to them. On the other hand, Sountis, who do not consume handia, considering it an indigenous cultural norm, consider them as higher than all other social groups. Even Sountis consider themselves higher in social hierarchy than Mahantas, who are non-tribal caste Hindus. Consumption of handia acts to define purity and impurity among social groups living in the village. During interview, even some of the Mahantas question the status-quo of Sountis:

“Sountis consider themselves higher as they were not taking handia and they consider us lower than their ritual status. But in modern times, they are also taking handia and liquor” (Sankar Mohanta)

The Mundas have a busy schedule from morning to evening. They go early to bed and woke up before sunrise. As mentioned earlier, they rarely punish their children and believe that the children should be left free to do their own work. Thus, like economic differentiation, differences exist between different groups in terms of rituals, festivals and also in language use and lifestyle.

4.11. Politics and Leadership

The political context of the village is influenced by reservation policies\(^{16}\) and the population structure of the village and moreover, the representation of their community standings. There is no particular leader or group of leaders, on which the entire village depends, for exercising their voting power. Each community has their own leader, who influences them to vote. The political climate with in the district has also largely influenced the politics and power relations in the village. The political circles of Kendujhar district, in which the village is situated, are mostly represented by leaders belonging to the Sounti community in the political hierarchy from top to bottom leadership. The 73\(^{rd}\) Amendment Act of 1992\(^{17}\), which came into force in 1993, 

\(^{16}\) As per the Provisions of Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act 1996, it is recommended to ensure that the Panchayat Bodies including Gram Panchayat in Scheduled Areas retain their overall tribal character. The Act mandates the reservation of seats for STs in every such body never to fall below 50 percent of the total number of seats and the posts of Chairperson of each Panchayat in a Scheduled Area to be reserved only for ST.

\(^{17}\) This Act made a provision for each state to set up a three-tier system of local government, constituting villages, intermediate and district level governance bodies, collectively referred to as the Panchayati Raj. Members to these local bodies are elected by people in every five years. Further, the Act also mandated that at least one-third of all council seats at the village (Gram Panchayat), Block level (Panchayat Samiti) and district level (Zilla Parishad) need to be filled by women, and the seats were also to be reserved for SCs and
mandated reservation of panchayat seats for STs. It opened a new era for participation of Sountis in political landscape as Jeffery et. al. discuss the rise of Chamars in politics in Nangal Jats after reservation of panchayat seats for SCs (Jeffrey et. al., 2008).

Reservations have guaranteed the selection of hundreds of Sountis in the Panchayat election in the district since there are reservations for seats for Scheduled Tribes in Panchayat election. Being the numerically-dominant social group and also more educated than other tribal groups, Sountis have gained from the election process. The number of political leaders belonging to Sountis at both higher and lower levels and their influence have been increasing year by year since they have been regularly winning the seats. The political dynamics at the district level has also influenced the Sounti leaders in the village to strengthen their political base. Although Santals and Mundas have their presence in village, their population size being less in number and not having strong social network and external support either from their own community or outside from the village or from other communities in the village to launch a strong bid for power, they rarely dare to contest the Panchayat seats reserved for Scheduled Tribes. Further, the Sounti community, having large political networks, manage to pool resources both financial and social capital to seek power in the election. Till now, one of the two ward members\textsuperscript{18} seat, which is reserved for Scheduled Tribes were won by Sountis only. After the introduction of the 73\textsuperscript{rd} and 74\textsuperscript{th} Amendment Act 1993, the panchayat elections were held since 1997 and since then, the Sountis have continued to win the one seat reserved for Scheduled Tribes in the village. The Sountis have been elected uncontested every time except in 1997 when one Munda person contested the elections. People from Mahanta community provoked the Munda person to file the nomination and he (Munda person) contested the election. However, he did not get much support to win the election. Since there are less chances to win the election, neither Mundas nor Santals dare to fight elections.

The person, who contested election shared:

\textit{“We never fight elections because no one really supports us or we do not have the large numbers to elect ourselves. We do not have large finances to influence...\textsuperscript{19}”}

\textsuperscript{18}For conducting elections, the entire Gram Sabha area is divided into territorial wards, each ward electing one ward member

\textsuperscript{19}STs. The seats of Chairpersons of these local bodies were also to be reserved for women and members of the SCs and STs. The reservation of seat for chairperson would function by rotation, i.e. in each election cycle, one-third of the districts would have their chairperson position reserved for women, and another set of districts would have this reservation in the next election cycle.
people to vote for us. Some years back, people from my community (Munda) and Mahantas from our habitation prompted me to fight election. Even though I provided them a feast with substantial expenditure as demanded by them in lieu of their promise to cast their vote in my favour, I lost the election with heavy margin”.

The village has also another ward member seat, which is a reserved seat for women of unreserved category. There was in-group competition among Mahanta community, but the seat was won by a woman belonging to the Mahanta community. However, her spouse and family members played an important role in prompting her to contest for election and her spouse helped her to discharge her duties.

Politicians mostly represent group interests and thus, favour their group members while extending facilities and distributing resources provided by the government. The individual and community with political power are taking advantage over allocation of resources while those who remain silent or have less power in political decision making, get less privilege in distribution of resources. The mapping of the minimum infrastructure in the village reveals that Mundas and Santals are still devoid of minimum facilities although these public goods are financed by the state governments. As documented by Besley et.al (1997), BPL card-holding politicians are less likely to allocate BPL cards to socially and economically disadvantaged households.

Local politicians in the village did not consider many of the Munda families while providing Below Poverty Line (BPL) card though they have very low socioeconomic status. The beneficiary households for BPL cards are identified by Gram Panchayat administration. As a process of identification of these beneficiaries, Gram Panchayat politicians have considerable responsibilities. Once a preliminary list of BPL beneficiaries is made, the list is supposed to be finalised in a meeting of the Gram Sabha. But these meetings are rarely organised and only some people participate in the proceedings.

Unlike the habitation belong to the Sounti and Mahanta community, there are no tube wells for the use of drinking water located in the habitation belong to the Munda community. One of the Munda people said,

“We did not have BPL card although we are surviving on wage labour and have meagre land. No one listens to our voice. Since we do not have any approach in

Ownership of a BPL card provides a household with access to subsidised food via the Indian public distribution system. It is also typically an eligibility requirement for other government welfare schemes, e.g. housing schemes.
politics, we did not get any benefit although the government provides many facilities to tribes”.

The continuous success of the people belongs to Sounti community in the political circle and its resultant influence on their increase in social status has resulted in conflict with dominant caste neighbours, the Mahantas in village. The Mahantas are socially and Educationally Backward Castes (SEBC) and are beneficiaries of reservation policies. However, the numbers of SEBCs are large in number in Odisha in comparison to the number of job opportunities available in the government sector and therefore, they have less chances to benefit from reservation policies to get the jobs. Further, the failure of government schools in providing appropriate education and their limited income did not help them to gain opportunities for higher education and also for the limited jobs available. Thus, deprivation of getting government jobs and other resources and even the under-representation of Mahantas in political circles made them realise that the government is indifferent for their welfare and development and aggravated alienation of Mahantas from the circles of influence on government.

The continuing dominance of Biju Janata Dal (BJD) as a political force has shaped the dominance of Sountis in the region. After establishment of BJD, a state regional party in 1997, the party has won both general election and state legislative election continuously with absolute majority. Over the 14 years of BJD rule, it’s vote share has increased 37% in 2009 to 44% in the 2014 state election. A series of free schemes and welfare measures like 25kgs of rice at Rs,2/ per kgs of rice to BPL families, cycles for tribal girls/boys who continue till tenth class are provided by government. There has been monopoly of Sounti leaders in the region and also in the distribution of facilities by the state governments. A Mahanta community member recounted instances when they were asked to give bribe for accessing facilities provided by the government and expressed dissatisfaction with the performance of the politicians over these years. They are in favour of change of government because BJD to fulfil their expectations. An elderly Mahanta shared:

“No facilities are provided for our upliftment but government is providing all sorts of benefits for the development of tribes. Their children are provided bicycles even though they are not attending schools. On the other hand, our children (belonging to Mahanta community) are attending schools but they were not given bicycle. The government is providing land to them (tribes) taking land from us, the land which has been cultivated by us since a long period of time. Further, we are being asked to give bribes in form of chickens or cash for
allocation of BPL card and provisions for which we are eligible. All collectors, doctors, teachers, ministers are STs and there is no seat for us. Even though we are educated there is nothing for us”.

The continuous drought and low yield from agriculture has complicated the problem of Mahantas since most of them depend upon agriculture to sustain their families. They have approached the government for help but no one has positively responded to them. Recounting his experience between those who are salaried and people depending upon agriculture, one of the Mahantas shared that those who are in service, their salary are increasing year by year but the community is dependent on wage labour and agriculture and incomes are decreasing continuously.

4.12. Nature and Scope of Educational facilities

The educational space of the village is shared by one high school, one upper primary school, one primary school and two Anganwadi centres. In this section, macro level picture of facilities in primary school, upper primary school and high school will be discussed.

4.12.1. The High School

The high school is residential in nature and only tribal boys from surrounding villages are the residents of the hostel. The high school was established in 1987 with the co-operation and leadership of some leading men in the village, mostly with the active involvement of some Mahantas and Sountis. The high School is located in the area of 3 acres. Initially, the high school started with Class VIII only and two small rooms.

Photo of High School
The high School has eight teachers and four non-teaching staff. One teacher and two non-teaching staff are from the Kendukhori village. During the academic year 2014-15, there were 137 students registered in the school. Mostly, the children attending the school are from outside the village. Since the majority of school children of the village drop-out in lower classes, the number are less in higher classes. About 57 per cent of the school children are Scheduled Tribes, out of which Girls are few, with only 22 per cent of total ST enrolment. The number of ST boys is more because the school has hostel facilities for ST boys and the ST boys from nearby villages took admission to benefit from the facilities provided in the school (Table 4.7). On the other hand, there is no significant gender differences in enrolment marked among the students belonging to OBC community. Among the OBC students, most of them belong to Mahanta community except one or two students belong to Maharana caste, who are largely engaged in the carpentry. The students residing in the hostel along with students belonging to Mahanta community from the nearby villages constitute the numerical majority in the high school compared to the students those who belong to the village. For example, in Class X, only seven out of 42 students are native of Kendukhori village. When looking at the social and gendered category, it was found that two Munda boys, two Sounti boys, two Mahanta girls and one Santal girl are from the village in 2014-15.

**Table 4.7. Enrolment in different Classes at Kendukhori High School (2014-15)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>OBC</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ST</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** School Record of High School, 2014-15

The school teachers are appointed in each subject: Science, Mathematics, English, Social Science, Sanskrit and Hindi. The teachers perform the duty as per the teaching period allocated to the subjects in the schedule prepared at the beginning of the academic session. Science and Mathematics have been given more emphasis in the weekly time schedule than other subjects. There is also more time allocated for teaching English. Sometimes, when subject teachers are unavailable on the allotted period, other teachers take the classes. Apart from teaching, teachers are also engaged in various tasks unrelated to teaching. They go for invigilation work during the Class X
4.12.2. The Upper Primary School

The upper primary school comprises of Class VI and VII are located close to the high school and by the roadside. This school was established in 1978. There are two classrooms and one office room in the school. 58 students enrolled in the school, out of which 40% are girl students. Tribal students constitute 45 per cent of the total enrolled students, out of which 31% are ST girls (Table 4.8). Apart from the children from the Kendukhori village, children from nearby villages – Harichandrapur and Kothagar also attend the school. Even those children access primary schooling in other areas, return to the village to take admission in the Kendukhori upper primary school. Some of these children were enrolled in some private schools or better-performing government schools located in the places of their relatives because the parents perceive the foundational education provided by primary school is important for children. The primary school in the village does not cater to the objective of providing quality education for their children.

Table 4.8. Enrolment of students in Kendukhori Upper Primary School (2014-15)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>ST Boys</th>
<th>ST Girls</th>
<th>ST Total</th>
<th>OBC Boys</th>
<th>OBC Girls</th>
<th>OBC Total</th>
<th>All Community Boys</th>
<th>All Community Girls</th>
<th>All Community Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: School Record

The teaching learning process in the upper primary school is centred on the responsibility of three teachers including one headmaster. The teachers in the school are highly qualified with several years of experience, which has been widely beneficial to the functioning of the school. The Headmaster has qualification of MA (Master in Arts) and B. Ed (Bachelor in Education) and has 17 years of teaching experience in the school. He also has the experience of working as Cluster Resource Centre Coordinator in Block Headquarter for five years’ period. Among two teachers, one teacher has done B. A, B. Ed and another lady teacher has done B.SC, C.T. (Equivalent to D. El. Ed) and also the qualification of Pharma and Pharma. While each of the teachers is given the charge of teaching whole periods in one class, the headmaster takes the classes whenever any of the teachers are absent in the school. He is mostly involved in academic administration, managing and coordination between teachers, parents and children.

22 Name changed to ensure confidentiality.
23 Name changed to ensure confidentiality.
The headmaster is quite concerned about the education of the children. He has taken special initiatives for the enhancing of learning capabilities of children particularly of Mundas through remedial classes on Saturdays and also in the last hours from Monday to Friday. The reason for holding remedial classes is that there are many students enrolled in Class VI, largely Mundas; who do not have basic reading and writing skills. The headmaster calls the parents whose children remain frequently absent in the school and also interact with the parents whenever he found them on his way. His empathy with the children in the school was clear when he shared his concern over parents’ inability to the opening of account in banks for disbursement of scholarships. He has regular contact with bank officials and has told them strongly about cooperating with the tribal children and their parents in opening the bank accounts. He maintains phone numbers of parents whom he contacts if their children remain absent and meets them personally to discuss about the issue of absenteeism.

Some of the Sounti and Santal parents preferred to send their children to Moktar Evesham since there is the facility for residential arrangement. Further, the families do not have to bear many financial responsibilities of their children enrolled in Evesham. The school was established in 1956, and it is managed by the state tribal welfare department. The school consists of Classes from I to V. Teachers of the school are well qualified graduates and postgraduates.

Mahanta families who have higher incomes try to send their children to Sarasvati Sishu Mandir located in Dhenkikote, 15 km from the village. Another Sarasvati Sishu Mandir is located in Ketanga, 5 km distance from the village. Many of these kids and children attend the Rutanga school traveling auto rickshaws every day. Some of the children studying in higher classes, stay in the residential hostel. Staying in the hostel helps them to get extra coaching from the teachers.

Non-government organisations in the area also helped in facilitating education and improving the economy of the village. People’s Cultural Centre (PECUC), which was established in the year 1992, started working in Kendukhori village in 2009 through the Campaign for Elimination of Child Labour (CECL). The functionary associated with PECUC in the village is a woman from the Mahanta community and completed her intermediate in Science stream.

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24Saraswati Sishu Mandir are a group of schools run by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
25Name changed for confidential purpose.
Towards facilitating the education of the children, PECUC runs a center “Shradha Bhawan”, which serves as child support center to facilitate supplementary education to school going children, learning mechanism for the preparatory and non-school going children. About 20 children were enrolled in this Shradha Bhawan in 2014-15, which runs from 7 am to 9 am. 15 children are from the Munda community. Apart from facilitating the education of the children in Shradha Bhawan, she also counsels the children, those who discontinue schooling and their parents. She has a number of success stories. Among them, mainstreaming a child in school who has never attended school for six months in Class X and persuading him to appear for the examination remains her foremost. She also prepares the children, especially Munda Children for reading and writing and teaches in the primary school when the teachers are absent. She also works very closely towards constituting and strengthening women self-help groups in the village.

4.12.3. The Primary School

The primary school has three rooms named after three leaders associated with building modern Odisha.: Gopabandhu Das, Madhusudan Das and Fakir Mohan Senavati. Since it was found that the percentage of children dropping out from school at primary level is high, the physical structure, curriculum and rituals of primary school were discussed in detail. Likewise, most rural schools in India are multi-grade(Ramachandran,2005), the primary school in Kendukhori village is also multi-grade, three teachers managing five classes.

4.12.3.1. Rules, Rituals and Norms of the School

School as a contested space is shaped by the interaction between the norms and values of the community and political economy of the state. Schools shapes habits, norms, and values, which influence individual and social development. There are certain rules and rituals defined by the state, which are followed by the school like other government school operates in the area. Rituals as complexes of symbolic expressions such as banners, colours, readings, pantomimes, and songs each "served as vehicles for a conception into a regular pattern (Langer, quoted by Geertz, 1973). Rituals often express sentiments about the natural and social environment of the participants (Turner 1969; Gluckman 1962).
Table 4.9: Daily Rituals of the Primary school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL. No.</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>March-April</th>
<th>June-February</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Prayer class</td>
<td>6.30 am to 6.45 am</td>
<td>10.00 am to 10.15 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>School timing</td>
<td>6.30 am to 11 am</td>
<td>9.30 am to 4.00 pm (Except Saturday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6.30 am to 12.00 pm (Saturday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Teaching Learning Periods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>First half</td>
<td>6.45 am to 9.05 (4 periods each containing 35 Minutes)</td>
<td>10.15 am to 1.15 pm (4 periods each containing 45 Minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Break</td>
<td>9.05 am to 9.30 am</td>
<td>1.15 pm to 2.00 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd half</td>
<td>9.30 am to 11.00 am (3 periods each of 30 Minutes duration)</td>
<td>2.00 pm to 4.00 pm (3 periods each of 40 Minutes duration)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Teaching Learning Periods (On Saturday from June to February)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>First half</td>
<td>6.45 am to 9.45 am (4 periods each of 45 minutes)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Break</td>
<td>9.45 am to 10.15 am (3 periods each of 35 minutes)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd half</td>
<td>10.45 am to 12.30 pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Midday meal</td>
<td>12.30 pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The primary school has a code of conduct, rules and routine for the efficient functioning of the School. From the month of February to June, the schedule of the school is from 9.30am to 12pm with 45-minute lunch break except on Saturdays. On Saturdays, the School starts at 6.30 am to 12 pm with 30-minute break. During the months of March and April, the school starts at 6.30 am to 11.00am.

The primary task of the children differs once they enter the school campus. They are divided into certain groups to complete their assigned tasks and to supervise the activities of different groups; certain student leaders are also appointed. There is social and gender segregation in the work division, which has been ritualised in the school.

Like in all schools, one of the most important rituals is the morning assembly. The students assemble in the verandah standing against the wall of two rooms used for Classes I, II, III, and IV. The place and position of some Mahanta girl children, is well-defined and thus, they take lead role in the prayer and always stand besides each other. The next gap areas are filled with the girls belonging to Mundas and Sountis. Boys stand next to the girls but with segments of Mahanta, Sounti and Munda subgroups as it seems a line of demarcation has been drawn. The class monitor, stand wherever they want. The Mahanta girls start reciting the morning prayer and others follow them.

The attendance of children at prayer time is also checked because many children leave the premised afterwards. The Mahanta girls studying in Class V take the leading role in conducting these rituals as well as inspection of trimmed nails etc. One or other Munda or Santal boy or girl often become a victim of these routine activities.
board examination. The school has a physical education teacher (PET), whose duty is confined to organising prayers before classes begin and organising physical education activities on Saturdays. Further, his engagement in the school also includes organising sports activities, accompanying and guiding students when they participate in sports and other co-curricular activities outside the schools. Except for the school headmaster, who is the native of the village, all teachers are from outside the village.

The school headmaster joined the high school as a teacher in 1996 and was appointed as headmaster in the year 2003. Apart from his administrative duty of looking at the management of the school and hostel, he teaches English in Class VIII and Class X and Geography in Class IX. The headmaster performs his role as an efficient administrator and committed professional teacher, sticks to schedules of teaching and conduct of examinations in the school, in conformity to the guidelines prescribed by Odisha Secondary School Teacher’s Association (OSSTA)\(^2\). The School uses question papers prepared by OSSTA for pre-test examination, test examination and pre-board examination of Class X and half-yearly and annual examination of all other Classes. The headmaster works closely with the managing committee, teaching staff and non-teaching staff of the school. He is mostly involved in almost all areas of school functioning including the hostel. He visits the hostel in the evening time and sometimes teaches the students. The headmaster is respected by the students particularly among the hostel residents. Sometimes, the headmaster pays money to the students when they visit their homes during vacation.

The high school has a School Management Committee\(^2\) (SMC), comprising of 17 members. Mahantas dominate the SMC with 11 members, four belong to the Sounti community, and one belongs to the Santal community. None of the members of the Munda community are represented on the SMC. Apart from two members form outside the village, has the presence in the committee. SMC meetings are organised every month. Various issues related to school are discussed at these meetings.

\(^2\)The Odisha Secondary School Teachers' Association (OSSTA) is the largest secondary school teachers' association in the state. It mainly aimed at protecting the interest of private school teachers at secondary level. It also helps private schools in academic and examination matters.

\(^2\)The responsibility of the SMC includes recording the academic progress of students, ensuring the enrolment and continuous attendance of children, monitoring the implementation of the mid-day meal programme and overall better implementation of the School-based programme. As per the rituals, the meeting of the SMC needs to be organised every month. Since the members rarely attend the meeting, the headmaster goes with the register and takes the signature of these SMC members.
The ritual of cleanliness is also featured in the daily rituals of the primary school. Girls sweep the classrooms and the ground as instructed by the lady teacher, who is given the responsibility of looking at hygiene and cleanliness of school campus. The girls arrange drinking water using the tube well inside the school. Two girls from each class perform this task. During summer, they go outside the school premises to collect drinking water.

The boys also do the work of cleaning the campus by collecting garbage and burning it. If a student is found roaming around and not working towards cleaning the campus, the team leader starts beating them. A Munda boy often became target by the ‘Environment Minister’ (a Mahanta boy) and the Sounti ‘Health and Hygiene Minister’ (belong to Sounti caste) of the child cabinet. No one was ever found complaining to the teacher against this unruly behaviour.

The School has some yearly rituals, which is observed as mentioned in the calendar. The national day of observance like Independence Day, Republic Day, Children’s Day and Teachers’ Day are celebrated every year. The rituals observed in these days are similar to many other schools, but differences are visible in the nature and kind of celebration. Similarly, Ganesh Puja and Saraswati Puja considered as Gods and Goddess of learning and as such these festivals are celebrated most ardently by the students to pray for success in their academic pursuits.

The cultural object with in the school has a logical linkage, which provides a perspective of grasping some part of the broader system (Griswold,1994), which Bourdieu refers to the objectified form of cultural capital and therefore needs description. The school office room, which is also used for the teaching learning of Class V, has pictures of important personalities and goddesses. The belief and sentiments of the home and community are reflected in the school. Goddess Tarini, considered as one of the chief presiding Goddess in Kendujhar district, is worshiped in the school. People in Kendujhar district start every work after worshipping their deities in a ritualistic way. As per the ritual, Mahanta girls, after cleaning the school campus, sprinkle water on the idol and then put Sandalwood powder on the forehead of goddess.

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26In Odisha, as a part of policy initiative, student cabinets are set up in government schools of increasing with the objective to increase student participation in the management of the school and enhance their leadership qualities. Members of the school cabinet are responsible for various activities related to hygiene and sanitation, food, environment, education, and discipline.
After offering Pujas, these girl children put sandalwood powder on the foreheads of teachers.

There are also pictures of eminent nationalist personalities such as Mahamta Gandhi and Subhash Bose. One ritual of significance is the recording daily attendance. Attendance is marked, but it remains only a ritual. Many students do not attend classes, but their attendance is recorded present because of the mid-day meal provision. For example, one Mahanta girl got married when she was studying in Class VIII. But her attendance was recorded present till the annual examination of Class VIII. It is noticed that once the children registered long absences, there is apprehension that school may not get the amount of food grain provided by the government. Similarly, the practice of signing from the members of the School Management Committee (SMC) members in the meeting record has been a recurrent practice in school. As per the norm, SMC meetings are to be held once in a month. But these meetings are rarely held.

The directives of the state government have influenced the school to display a toll-free number written in bold and capital numbers where stakeholders can contact the state administration for any assistance or complaints. Similarly, there is a place in the main wall to display School Information Section for daily updates. However, no one ever fills ups the space meant for updating the daily attendance.

4.12.3.2. Teachers: Roles and Functions

The headmaster of the primary school in the village belongs to the tribal community. He has studied up to intermediate in Arts (equivalent to Class XII and also has a Certificate in Teacher’s Training (CT) (equivalent to Junior Basic Training) under the Training provision of State Council for Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Government of Odisha. He has experience of teaching for 23 years and joined the school as headmaster from June 2014. He has the responsibility for performing both teaching and administrative roles in primary school. He is involved in every area of functioning of school from convening staff meetings and SMC meeting, construction and maintenance of the school building and overall, maintaining discipline in school.

The second teacher in the primary school mainly teaches in Class III and IV. He is from the open category. He has professional teacher training diploma. He is forty-nine years old now and has only one son, who is studying in Class X in one of the residential private school. He resides in a rented room, which is located 10 km from the
school. This teacher considers teaching as a noble profession and therefore, chose to be a teacher job. Out of the 18 years of experience as a primary school teacher, he has taught in this primary school since last nine years. Before joining of the presently headmaster of the school, he was the headmaster and looked after all the administrative work in addition to his academic responsibilities. Therefore, he has good rapport with the local village leaders. He is interested in a transfer to another schools in the area. He admitted that he has political connections with the MLA (Member of Legislative Assembly) of this locality, who belongs to his native village, which will help in a transfer nearby his village area. However, he is not interested to get transferred to the schools located in his native village because he feels that people may not give respect to him.

The third teacher is a lady teacher who teaches in Class I and II. She started her career as an insurance agent and later choose teaching as her career. Earlier her father was a teacher, but after his untimely death, she took up the job. She has been teaching in the school since 1995. She has the experience of working in two different places before joining the present school. Her husband works in a state government job, around 70 km from the school. She manages to visit her husband’s place once in a month. She stays alone in a rented room located around 10 km from school and travels by bus to the school. Sometimes, she also takes rides from motorcyclists to travel to the school. She has only a male child, who is studying in Class X where the son of the second teacher also studies. Apart from her responsibility of teaching Class I and II children, she is given the responsibility for maintaining cleanliness in the school. Her duty in the school usually starts with directing the children to do various tasks like sweeping the floor, cleaning the whole campus, filling water, etc. She instructs some children, mostly girls, to do even some unhygienic works like cleaning the toilets.

She rarely interacts with other teaching staff members or pay visits to the office room. She is not considered as a popular teacher in the locality. People in the village complained that she fails to teach their children. Some of them also complained that she lacks the knowledge and competence to teach lower classes.

This teacher is critical about the nature and character of parents and School Management Committee. In her perception and experience, parents are very unsupportive and do not know the true value of teaching nor a teacher. She complained that people are ‘jealous’ and do not cooperate. Recounting her experience, she shared
that during her initial posting in 2003, she was staying in one of the two class room of the school since there was no transport facility. But after 2-3 months, some of the villagers threatened her saying that she could not stay on the school campus.

Parents report that the lady teacher does not teaching well and resented that she engages children in menial works. Sometimes she asked children to bring flowers and vegetables from their garden. Parents had complained to the higher authorities and requested her transfer. There was an instance when they locked school for 2-3 days and did not let the teachers to enter. But their effort did not yield results since the lady teacher has a good relationship with higher authorities. On the other hand, she shared that she wants to teach in this school until her retirement. She shares:

“Higher authorities know that I am very punctual and performing my duties properly. They know about my punctuality and dedication. They are cordial and helpful. Therefore, in spite of many complaints by villagers regarding my transfer, no action has been taken. I will do my duties properly. If they want a transfer, I have also taken a decision that I will retire from this school only. My decision to stay in the school would be stronger. More the villagers will trouble; stronger will be my decision to stay in this school”.

4.12.3.3. **Curriculum and System of Evaluation**

The educational space of the primary school is designed in such a manner that except Class V, teaching of Class I and II are held in one room while teaching for Class III and IV are held in another room. As per the officially prescribed curriculum by the state through Odisha Primary Education Planning Authority (OPEPA), Bhubaneswar, in Class I and II, there is separate weightage of subjects with 40% on learning First Language, 30% on learning Mathematics and 10% in Environmental Studies while 5% each has to be focused on Art Education, Work Education and Health and Physical Education. On the other hand, for classes in Class III, IV and V, attention has to be given with 25% weight on learning Mother Tongue, 15% weightage on learning English language, 20% in Mathematics, 10% weightage each on learning Science and Social Sciences and 5% each has to be focused on Art Education, work Education and Health and Physical Education. The primary school has prepared the yearly time table accordingly. However, this is rarely followed. Once the teacher enters the classroom, they start teaching in their own way. Most of the time, in Class I and II, the teacher teaches children for writing alphabets in Odia language and asks children to read from textbooks. It was rarely found that she uses any activity to make learning interesting.
Students were also seen leaving the classroom frequently. From the lower classes, children belong to Mahantas and Sountis are at an advantage; since their parents and older siblings help them to learn basic reading and writing skills, which helps them much in higher classes.

As per the curriculum framework, in Class III, IV, and V, the teacher is expected to focus more on developing reading skills among students. From Class III onwards, the child learns English alphabets and starts practising them along with Odia, Mathematics, Science and Social Sciences. Teachers mainly focus on completing the syllabus and teach subjects whenever they wish. However, Munda and Santal children and some of the Mahanta and Sounti children, are relatively less advantaged. The teacher teaching in Class III and IV shared that since most of the children particularly among Munda and Santal children do not even know to write alphabets, it becomes very challenging to teach them. Further, the nature of absenteeism is more among the Munda children. So, they are unable to keep up with learning.

The Headmaster, who teaches in Class V tries to teach best of his capabilities. The teaching-learning process seems a completely a sense of failure to children who are unable to read and/or comprehend the lessons. There are no remedial classes offered to these children towards improving their learning.

### 4.10. Weightage in Curriculum prescribed by OPEPA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Class I, II and III</th>
<th>Class III, IV and V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>First Language</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Second Language English</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Environmental Studies</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Environmental Studies-I (Science)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Environmental Studies-II (Social Science)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Art Education</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Work Education</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Health and Physical Education</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Peace Education</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: OPEPA

The children in Class I and II are evaluated on the basis of oral test only. The children studying in Class III to V are evaluated based on both descriptive and short answer type questions. Children are promoted from one Class to next Class under the Right to Education Act, 2009 since it prescribes for no detention system. But due to poor enrolment and the disinterest of parents towards enrolling children in school, the
teacher intentionally detains some of those enrolled in Class 1. At times, parents, especially Mahantas request detention of their children because they believe that they have not attained adequate standards.

4.12.3.4. Child’s Place inside and outside of the Classroom

In Kendukhori primary school, the total students enrolled are 66, out of which, 31 are girls and 45.5% of the total students are Scheduled Tribes. OBCs particularly Mahanta constitute 55.5% of the total population. Among Mahanta children, girls constitute 41.7% of the total. Girls constitute 53.4% out of total 30 enrolled Scheduled Tribe children.

Table- 4.11: Enrolment of students in Kendukhori Primary School in 2014-15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>OBC</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: School Record

The child chooses his/her space and acting together in different contexts in relation to peer connections and friendship networks. It provides him a source of feedback, a feeling of belongingness and a foundation of identity (Sharma, 2014, Underwood, 2004). The children negotiate their world of friendship in the community through play and game and participating in social interaction with the children in the neighbourhoods in various public spaces such as courtyard of the village, playground, street and various other spaces. These spaces provide the opportunity for the children and their parents to participate in the shared cultural activities. Further, the children develop a strong sense of identity attached to the specific geographic location of their neighbourhoods. More frequent the chances of contact and interaction between the children, adults, and other parents, stronger the chances of bonding and networking between them.

Game and play form a significant aspect of children’s time in school. Play enhances relationships and friendships. Further, various groups of people within a culture who play together, develop a strong cultural association based on informal relationships. Children get opportunities for the play during recess and in the last period
of the class. There are also children who attempt to play even when they go to the toilets. Most of the children choose their partner from their social groups and even from their habitation because of familiarity from an early age. Children learn to play game from the adults of their community and play with their peer group in their space and thus, become close to each other.

Mahanta children mostly play with peers belonging to their community setting and thus, they reproduce their affinity in school. Similarly, Munda children also play with their peer group belonging to own community. Seating arrangement in classrooms are shaped by community identity. Each one of the Mahanta children sits with their own peer social group. One of the Munda girls rarely talks and plays with the children from her community and was found mainly with Mahanta children. Her father is educated till Class 5. He always advised her daughter not to be friend with children of their community since there are chances that she may get misled by. Her father shares:

“Children in our Munda community do not focus on studies at home. They only roam here and there. If my daughter will join them in play and fun, she may get spoiled and will not study. So, I have instructed her not to mix with them”.

There appears to be a great deal of influence by adults of Mahanta community in seat selection in classes. Mahanta girls always occupy the front seats, followed by Mahanta boys by Mahanta boys and then by Sounti and Munda children. Sounti and Munda children, who generally reached school earlier, sit in their designated places. Similarly, in prayer class, there is also compartmentalisation of space. The school verandah as a space used for the prayer has been a compartmentalised space in which girls and boys stand separately and offer prayer.

As far as access to primary education concerned, different communities exercise different options for their children based on their financial resources, community support and adequacy of the teaching-learning process. The primary school mostly attended by girls across all the communities and Munda boys and some of the Mahanta boys belonging to the family in the lower socio-economic status. It is well known to parents that the primary school is characterised by poor facilities, indifferent teachers and multigrade classroom, what Ramachandran (2014) calls high poverty school. Therefore, Mahan’s with better economic status send to private schools for accessing primary education and most of the Sounti families use their social networks and try to send their boy child to ashram school or any private school, which provides scholarships. Those Mahanta and Sounti families send their children to primary school
attempt for alternative strategies to compensate for the inadequacy of learning in the school through private tuition or by taking educated siblings at home or support from neighbourhood. The Santal habitation is located at a distance from the primary school and fearing that crossing the highway is a challenging task for their children. Most Santal parents do not send their children to village primary school. Rather, they prefer to send their children to school located in a nearby village for which they do not have to cross the road. On the other hand, Munda parents send their children to the primary school, even though they understand that the teaching learning process operating the primary school hardly adds any value to their children’s basic skills. Mundas have neither the adequate financial resources for private tuitions nor do they have any educated persons in the community to help in the education of children except the option provided by the volunteers working in the NGO.

4.13. Summary
The aim of this chapter was to characterise the socio-cultural and economic context of the village, which is home to four communities of people: Mahanta, Munda, Sounti and Santal. I have attempted to capture the history, origin, economic status, parenting strategies, political participation, social and cultural practices of different communities in the village to understand how these social dynamics affect school participation. The attempt was also made to locate sources of livelihood and village economy to demarcate economic difference between different communities. Towards exploring the population dynamics and economic characteristics, household census was done for 171 household in the village. I also tried to discuss with elder members of each community to understand the origin and culture of different communities.

Each of these communities resides in the distance to each other in a settlement pattern with their group of people, which gives them a sense of belongingness to each other. Mahantas have the larger population in the village followed by Sountis, Santals, and Mundas. Mahanta belong to non-tribal community while Mahantas, who belong to Kudumi Community, were given Scheduled Tribe status up to 1931. Now, Mahantas are demanding for inclusion in the Scheduled Tribe list. Other three communities Sounti, Munda and Santals belong to Scheduled Tribes and Sountis are larger in population than Mundas and Santals, which help them to gain politically, socially and economically. The passing of 73rd and 74th Amendment Act, 1992, which mandated reservation of seat in Panchayati Raj level was a game changer in the power dynamics
of the village, characterise a new line of interaction between different group of population.

Agriculture has been major occupation for Mahantas and Sountis. Mundas and Santals have limited agricultural land and are largely dependent upon manual casual labour since the produce from the agricultural land does not suffice even for a month. They also migrate to nearby districts for manual labour. Some of the Sountis and Mahantas have also salaried income and they are in Government services. Some of the Mahants and Sountis are migrating outside the state to supplement family incomes. Recently the rise of some Sountis, after their sons manage to get good jobs through the good education by the support of NGOs and programmes of government, has raised aspirations among other Sountis. The socialisation and parenting strategies were also explored in this chapter.

As far as access to primary education concerned, different communities exercise different options for their children based on their financial resources, community support and adequacy of the teaching-learning process. The primary school mostly attended by girls across all the communities and Munda boys and some of the Mahanta boys belonging to the family in the lower socio-economic status. It is well known to parents that the primary school is characterised by poor facilities, indifferent teachers and multigrade classroom, what Ramachandran (2014) calls high poverty school. Therefore, Mahantas with better economic status send to private schools for accessing primary education and most of the Sounti families use their social networks and try to send their boy child to ashram school or any private school, which provides scholarships. Those Mahanta and Sounti families send their children to primary school attempt for alternative strategies to compensate for the inadequacy of learning in the school through private tuition or by taking educated siblings at home or support from neighbourhood. The Santal habitation is located at a distance from the primary school and fearing that crossing the highway is a challenging task for their children. Most Santal parents do not send their children to village primary school. Rather, they prefer to send their children to school located in a nearby village for which they do not have to cross the road. On the other hand, Munda parents send their children to the primary school, even though they understand that the teaching learning process operating the primary school hardly adds any value to their children’s basic skills. Mundas have neither the adequate financial resources for private tuitions nor do they have any
educated persons in the community to help in the education of children except the option provided by the volunteers working in the NGO. The next chapter describes how conditions within the home and school influence the participation of children.