



# Cooperative Labour in Odisha Tribes

## Why in News

The concept of labour cooperatives is popular in almost all tribal communities in Odisha including the **Dongria Kondh, Juanga, Lanjia Saura, Saura, Didayi, Paudi Bhuyan and Kandh.**

## Key Points

- **Need:** Farming on the steep hill slopes **requires more labour which a single family cannot provide.** Therefore, they have evolved an indigenous system to engage the labour available in the community to accomplish the **farming tasks of all the families of the village.**
- **Benefit:** These cooperatives ensure all families of the community are ensured food and **no fields remain barren.** They also strengthen the **feeling of collective belongingness** among the members.
- **Cooperatives in Different Tribes:**
  - **Lanjia Saura:** All members are bound to participate in constructing terraces for farming on the slopes and designing and creating traditional irrigation systems, harnessing hill streams.
  - **Juanga community:** All villagers trek hills, clear trees and create crop fields. The village council ensures that all members contribute their labour.
    - The Juanga and Saura are **Munda ethnic groups** from Southern Odisha.
    - They are **Austroasiatic tribes** i.e. they are believed to be **part of the first wave of migration out of Africa** about 60,000 years ago.
  - **Dongria Kondh:** This tribe practices **at least 10 types of cooperative labour sharing within the community.**
  - Types of Cooperatives in Dongria Kondh Tribe:
    - **Sahabati:** All Dongria households of the village work in turns for a day on the land of one villager.
    - **Daasibati:** Cooperative of younger, unmarried girls from the village for less strenuous but tedious work such as weeding, fencing of fields, cleaning or harvesting of crops.
    - **Dhangdabati:** Young bachelors are required to take up work such as felling trees, hoeing, carrying logs and digging pits.

## Dongria Kondh

- **About:** They derive their name from dongar, meaning 'hill' and are the member of **Khond Tribe**
- **Status:** They are a **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group.**
- **Habitation:** They reside in the Niyamgiri hill range of Odisha, around 4,500 ft above sea level.
- **Language:** **Kui language** (Oral only, not written)
- **Beliefs:** They worship **Niyam Raja**, the god of the Niyamgiri Forests.
- **Occupation:** They sustain themselves from the resources of the Niyamgiri forests, practising horticulture and shifting cultivation
- **Issues:** They are currently facing displacement due to the **Bauxite mining in the Niyamgiri**

hills.

- They are also facing **severe health problems** because of **dust coming from** the red mud pond (waste generated by the refinery) **site**.

### Tribes in Odisha

- Odisha is home to 62 tribal communities — the **largest diverse groups of tribal population in India**.
  - 13 of them are PVTGs— **Bonda, Birhor, Chuktia Bhunjia, Didayi, Dungaria Kandha, Hill Kharia, Juang, Kutia Kondh, Lanjia Saora, Lodha, Mankirdia, Paudi Bhuyan and Saora**.
- Tribal populations are found in the **entire seven districts of Kandhamal, Mayurbhanj, Sundargarh, Nabarangpur, Koraput, Malkangiri and Rayagada**, and in parts of 6 other districts.

[Source: TH](#)

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