Indigenous Land Classification and Management among the Bhunjia Community of Odisha

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Abstract: This paper attempts to focus on the indigenous land and soil classification system of Bhunjia community. The Bhunjia community earns its livelihood from Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary, located in Nuapada district of Odisha. We adopted ethno-ecological approach to reflect upon the socio-cultural milieu and importance of the indigenous knowledge system of the land among the Bhunjia community. We used different sets of interview guidelines to gather qualitative data from different knowledge specialists belonging to the Bhunjia society. Our study revealed link between Bhunjia indigenous identity, natural resources and self-governance in Sunabeda sanctuary area. It also revealed that the indigenous knowledge system on land resources of the Bhunjias is interlinked with its clan organization and other forms of socio-cultural systems.

Key words: Bhunjia, land, ethno-ecology, indigenous knowledge, Sunabeda sanctuary, Odisha.