

A Study of the Gond Tribe's Livelihood Practices and Traditional Ecological Knowledge Systems in Central India

Dr. Rakesh Singh Paraste

Assistant Professor & HOD Department of English Swami Vivekananda Govt. P.G. College, Harda (MP)
Affiliated to Barkatullah University, Bhopal (MP)

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Abstract:

The present research work is a maiden attempt to explore the rich cultural heritage, sustainable livelihood practices, and integral connection between the Gond tribes and the natural environment in Central India. Multi-disciplinary approaches have been applied to explore the various aspects, including traditional knowledge systems, ecological wisdom, and the role of folklore in preserving their cultural identity. The Gonds are the aboriginal indigenous people and one of the second largest tribal groups after Bhil tribes in India. The present work investigation will focus on understanding the Gond tribes' sustainable livelihood strategies, such as agriculture, forestry, and handicrafts, and their impact on the local ecosystem.

The study will also analyze the challenges faced by the Gond tribes due to rapid socio-economic changes, modernization and globalization. There is an urgent need to explore the socio-cultural heritage and their spiritual interconnectedness with nature and consolidated efforts is required to preserve their culture, tradition, beliefs, practices, folklore, history, society, rituals, festivals and their life. The findings will be valuable for policymakers, conservationists, and researchers working towards the preservation and upliftment of indigenous Gond Communities and their interaction with nature in Central India.

Keywords: Gond tribes, Cultural heritage, Sustainable livelihoods, Environmental interactions and challenges, Ecological beliefs etc.

Introduction:

The Gond tribe is one of the second largest indigenous communities after Bhil tribe in India, which has a rich cultural heritage and a deep-rooted connection with nature. The research intends to contribute valuable insights to environmental awareness studies, fostering a deeper appreciation for the Gond tribes' resilience and their importance in maintaining the region's cultural and ecological heritage. The present research work will also contribute to the existing knowledge of indigenous communities, cultural

preservation, and sustainable development by offering a detailed analysis of the Gond tribes' unique cultural heritage, sustainable livelihood practices, and their interconnectedness with the environment. The findings will be very useful for promoting a better understanding of these communities and developing strategies to support their well-being and growth in the face of ongoing socio-economic changes.

The study will also focus on the role of this unique relationship in shaping the Gond tribes

identity and their contributions to the preservation and sustainable use of natural resources in Madhya Pradesh. Furthermore, it will analyze the potential implications of this relationship for contemporary conservation efforts and development strategies in Madhya Pradesh.

Gond Tribes at a Glance:

The Gonds are the aboriginal indigenous people and one of the second largest tribal groups after Bhil tribes in India as per the census 2011. The Gonds have established many kingdoms of historical significance. The Gondwana is one the famous for it and which was the ruling kingdom in the Gondwana region of India. The Garha Kingdom includes many parts of Madhya Pradesh immediately to the north of it and some parts of western Chhattisgarh¹. The Gonds speak Hindi & Gondi dialect. They have their own glorious and prosperous histories which includes several revered heroes, freedom fighters, saints, and Gond Kings. The geography they revere is often endowed with specific extraordinary beauty, culture, richness and glorious histories. Their main occupation is agriculture hence their life is totally associated with nature and they know very well that how to preserve and utilize the natural resources as per their requirements. They are the worshiper of the nature.

Madhya Pradesh, a state in central India, is the home to a significant portion of the Gond population. The Gond tribes have a rich cultural history and a deep connection with their natural environment. The Gond people have a long history, with their presence in India dating back to the 13th century. They are known for their vibrant Gond art, which reflects their deep-seated relationship with nature and their surroundings. This artistic expression is often seen in the murals and paintings that adorn the walls of Gond homes, showcasing their reverence for the environment and its various elements.

The Gonds is one of the largest Adivasi (Indigenous) Communities in India, a Dravidian origin and can be traced to the pre-Aryan era. The Gond called themselves Koi or Koiture, but others called them Gond since they lived in the green surrounding mountains. The Gonds or the Koiture are a heterogeneous group spreading over the large areas from the Godavari gorges in the south to the Vindhya Mountains in the north. In Madhya Pradesh, they inhabit the dense forests of the Vindhyas, Satpura and Mandla in the Narmada (the river known as life line in MP) region of the Amarkantak range for centuries. The central province was called Gondwana and which is now the Central Provinces and Berar was recongnized as the state of Madhya Pradesh. As many as four separate Gond Kingdoms- situated in the northern, central and southern parts which are mentioned in details in the Ain-I-Akbari. Over the year they were gradually deprived of their kingdoms and their land and their survival was threatened.² (ignca.gov.in) The Gond tribes have been known for their sustainable livelihood practices, such as agriculture, forestry, and handicrafts, which have minimal negative impacts on the environment. However, with the rapid socio-economic changes and globalization, these communities are facing numerous challenges that threaten their cultural heritage and sustainable practices.

Livelihood plays a crucial role in understanding the socio-economic conditions of any community. In the context of the Gond tribe in Madhya Pradesh, their livelihood is characterized by a diverse range of occupations. Traditionally, the Gond people have been engaged in agriculture. However, due to the modernization and globalization, they have adapted to new occupations such as wage labor, service sectors, and small-scale industries. Despite these adaptations, the Gond tribe continues to face numerous challenges in maintaining their livelihood. These challenges include far from the

² <https://ignca.gov.in/divisionss/janapada-sampada/tribal-art-culture/adivasi-art-culture...>

¹ <https://indigenoupeoplenet.wordpress.com/2023/05/04/mythologies-of-the-gonds-tribe/>

education, healthcare, and basic amenities, as well as the impact of government policies and development programs. Understanding the Gond tribe's livelihood in Madhya Pradesh is essential for devising sustainable development strategies that cater to their unique needs and aspirations while preserving their cultural identity and ecological knowledge.

Objectives of the Research Study:

1. To explore the Socio-cultural heritage and integral connection between the Gond tribes and the natural environment in Central India.
2. To analyze the sustainable livelihood practices of the Gond tribes and their impact on the local ecosystem.
3. To examine the interconnectedness between the Gond tribes and their natural environment, focusing on ecological wisdom and traditional knowledge systems.
4. To identify challenges faced by the Gond tribes due to globalization and rapid socio-economic changes.
5. To contribute valuable insights to the existing knowledge on indigenous communities and their perspectives on sustainable living and ecological balance.

Review of Literature:

The Review of Literature is a systematic overview of knowledge on a particular research topic that helps us to identify the relevant theories and methods applied as well as it indicates gaps in existing research work. While reviewing the concerned relevant topics then it is found that there are very less and rare researches have been done on the relevant topics. The systematic chronological literature has been reviewed which are as under:

1. Elwin, Verrier (1955) was among the first to document the Gond tribes' way of life, focusing on their cultural practices, folklore, and social organization. These works laid the foundation for understanding the Gond tribes' deep-rooted connection with nature.
2. Hiralal and Singh, K. S. (1977) and Bose, N. K. (1980) delved into the cultural dimensions of the Gond tribes, exploring their art, music, and literature, which often reflected their relationship with nature.

3. Mishra, S.P. (1996), Through his research entitled "Forest and Livelihoods: A Study of the Gonds in Central India", Mishra has explored about the the Gond tribes dependence on forests for their livelihoods, highlighting the challenges they face due to deforestation and changing government policies.
4. Singh, V. B. (1995) and Patel, M. S. (1998) focused on the economic dimensions of the Gond tribes, examining their subsistence strategies and the role of nature in their livelihoods.
5. "The Gonds of Central India: Culture, Society, and Ecology" edited by Kahre, R.S. (2002) through this important anthology, Khare explores various scholars perspectives on the Gond tribes, focusing on their cultural heritage, social organization, and interactions with the environment.
6. Kawasi, R. K. (2015) and Dubey, A. K. (2017) have emphasized the role of nature in shaping the Gond tribes' identity, exploring how their relationship with the environment has evolved over time and influenced their social and cultural practices.
7. Patel (2016) explores the Gond tribe's relationship with nature and their role in the conservation of forest resources. The study emphasizes the importance of incorporating indigenous knowledge in sustainable development initiatives.
8. Singh, S. K. (2020) has highlighted the significance of the Gond tribes' unique relationship with nature and its potential applications in contemporary conservation efforts and sustainable development strategies.

Identification of Research Gap:

At this present scenario, many research works trending on tribal centric issues. Despite the significant research conducted on the Gond tribes and their relationship with nature in Madhya Pradesh, several research gaps still exist, and there remains a research gap that needs to be addressed and to be explored and preserved due to globalization and modernization. These gaps provide opportunities for further exploration and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the Gond community's socio-economic conditions and cultural heritage. This gap

primarily pertains to the under-exploration of the dynamic and adaptive nature of the Gond tribe's relationship with their environment in the context of rapid socio-economic and environmental changes. With the increasing pressures of modernization, globalization, and climate change, it is very essential to understand how the Gond tribes are adapting their age-old relationship with nature to these new challenges. Some of the key research gaps are such as deforestation, climate change, and Environmental Impact and the influx of modern technologies, Role of education and awareness programs in preserving and promoting the Gond tribe's unique relationship with nature can help identify effective strategies for cultural preservation and sustainable development etc. Addressing these research gaps can significantly enhance our understanding of the Gond tribes' unique relationship with nature and contribute to the development of effective strategies for environmental conservation, cultural preservation, and sustainable development in the context of rapid socio-economic and environmental changes etc. In this connection, the present research work will try to fill the above research gaps.

Significance of the Study:

The significance of studying the Gond tribes livelihood in Madhya Pradesh lies in its potential to contribute to a variety of domains, including researchers, academia, policy-making, and sustainable development. The findings from this research can have far-reaching implications for understanding the complex socio-economic conditions of the Gond community and informing targeted interventions for their upliftment. The study holds significant implications for cultural preservation, sustainable development, environmental conservation, gender equity, policy formulation, interdisciplinary research, and education and awareness. By addressing the research gaps and exploring the challenges of the Gond tribe's livelihood, the study can contribute to improving their socio-economic conditions and overall well-being.

Research Methodology:

The mixed-methods, interdisciplinary research approach have been applied to find out the objectives of the present research work. This approach combines both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. The findings will be supported with conducting a thorough literature review to identify existing research, theories, and frameworks related to the Gond tribes livelihood and their environmental interactions, ethnographic observations, interviews, focus group discussions as well as personal experiences as a community member will also a great help to find out the objectives of the research work.

Gond Tribes and Jal Janagal and Jameen:

Gond Tribes are deeply connected with nature. They are very strong believer on their Kuldevi and Devta (God & Goddess). They worship a high God known as Badadev whose alternate names are Fadapen, Bhagwan, kumar Lingo, Parsa Pen and Saga tree (a holy tree for them). Thakur Dev of Gond's Tribes is associated with the Pakri Tree. They have a unique faith and believe on nature which can be easily appeared in their life and culture. According to their culture and religious belief the word BHAGWAN contains with five different eternal *tatva* (elements) i.e. Bha means *Bhumi* (Earth), G means *Gagan* (Sky), W means *Wayu* (Air), A Means *Agni* (Fire) and N means *Neer* (Water) etc. Hence, in view of above it is clearly visible in their beliefs and lifestyle that they are very closely associated with *Jal*, *Jungle* and *Jameen* (Nature) by heart.

The Gond tribes, historically known for their strong connection with "Jal Jangal Zameen" (Water, Forest, and Land), have a deep-rooted relationship with nature. This relationship is not only essential for their livelihoods but also reflects their cultural identity and spiritual beliefs. Understanding the Gond tribes' relationship with Jal Jangal Zameen is crucial for sustainable development, conservation, and policy making.

1. Water (*Jal*):

The Gond tribes have developed unique water management practices, such as building rainwater harvesting structures and constructing small dams to store water during monsoons. These practices not only ensure their water security but also contribute to the overall ecological balance. Policymakers can learn from these traditional water management techniques and integrate them into modern water resource management strategies.

2. Forest (*Jangal*):

The Gond tribes have a strong connection with forests, considering them as their 'Mother' and a source of life. They have developed a deep understanding of forest ecology, which has enabled them to use forest resources sustainably. Policymakers can involve the Gond tribes in forest conservation initiatives, recognizing their traditional ecological knowledge and incorporating it into sustainable forest management practices.

3. Land (*Zameen*):

The Gond tribes have been cultivating land for generations, adopting practices that maintain soil fertility and promote sustainable agriculture. They have a strong sense of land ownership and stewardship, which is essential for maintaining the ecological balance. Policymakers can support the Gond tribes in preserving their agricultural practices, providing them with access to modern agricultural technologies, and ensuring their land rights are protected.

The Gond tribes' relationship with *Jal Jangal Zameen* is deeply rooted in their cultural identity. Their folklore, art, and spiritual beliefs are intertwined with nature. Understanding and incorporating their traditional ecological knowledge into policy making can lead to more effective and sustainable conservation and development strategies. It must be kept in mind carefully while making the welfare policies and schemes for the betterment of the Gond tribes, it is very essential to respect and support of the Gond

tribes' unique connection with nature while promoting their cultural preservation and economic well-being.

Parsa Pen and its significance:

Parsa Pen holds significant importance in understanding the Gond tribes' way of life, their connection to nature, and their artistic heritage. The Gond Tribes have a deep-rooted cultural connection with the forest, as they believe that nature is imbued with spiritual energy. They have a rich tradition of art, music, and folklore that reflect their deep respect and understanding of the environment. The Parsa Pen, therefore, holds a special place in their cultural and spiritual identity.



Figure1. Representation of the 'Parsapen'³ symbol is the great integral association of Nature, culture and religious with Gond tribes.

The 'Parsapen' symbol on the above image encapsulates the fundamental principles of the religious culture of the Adivasi Gond Tribes community and their great association with nature. The Parsa Pen holds significant cultural, spiritual, and practical importance for the Gond Tribes. It is a symbol of their deep connection with nature and their efforts towards sustainable living. The conservation of their beliefs and practices are very crucial not only for the preservation of its unique ecosystem but also for the well-being and continued cultural practices of the Gond Tribes.

³ Source: <https://in.pinterest.com/pin/228-likes-6-comments-one-gondian-gondi-culture-on-instagram--804174077208163109/> accessed on 28.04.2024

In recent years, conservation efforts are being made to protect the Parsa Pen and its diverse wildlife. The Gond Tribes and various Gondwana political parties as well as non-political organizations have been actively involved in these initiatives, as they understand the importance of preserving their ancestral habitat and the resources it provides. They have also been working towards sustainable practices to ensure the long-term well-being of their community and the environment.

Significance of Badadev in Gond Tribes:

Badadev, also known as “Bada Dev” or “Great God,” is an essential deity in the Gond tribal religion, which holds significant importance for the Gond tribes in Madhya Pradesh. The Badadev represents the supreme power in the Gond pantheon and is worshipped as the creator and protector of the universe, including the earth, forests, and its inhabitants. Badadev, also known as the “Lord of the Earth” is an essential deity in the Gond tribal community. He is considered the protector of the land, forests, and natural resources, and is worshipped by the Gond tribes for their agricultural prosperity and overall well-being. When Gond people meet to each other, they generally wish to by saying Jay Badadev, jay Seva etc in their daily routine.

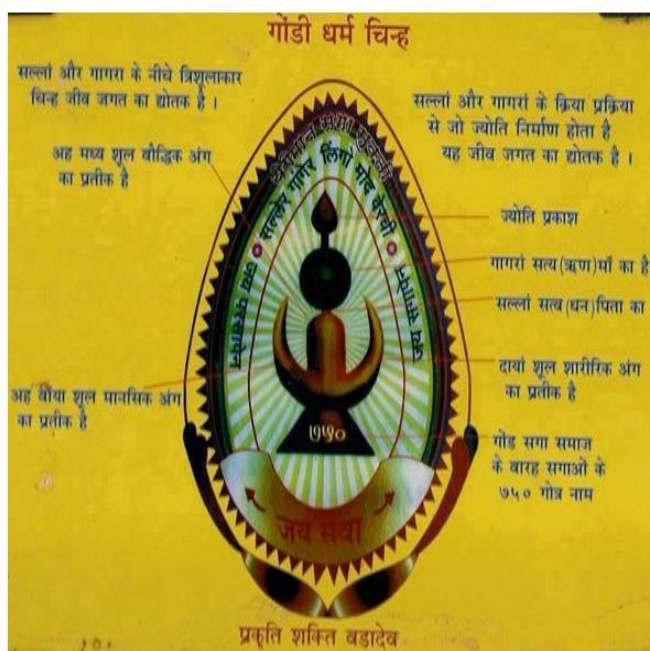


Figure 2: The description of the Gondi Dharma Chinha & Parsapen symbol in Hindi in the above figure.

The above figure tells us about the ‘Gond religious symbol and Parsapen’ symbol in Hindi. The top of caption of the image reads ‘Gondi Dharma Chinh’ “Gond Religious Symbol” and the bottom caption reads *Prakruti Shakti Badadeva*, means Lord of the Earth or Bada Deva. In such a way, the concept of Parsapen represents primordial and universal divinity in Koya Punem. The indigenous philosophical system of the Gonds is called Koya Punem. The middle pillar of the ‘trident’ represents intellect *Bouddhika Anga*, and the left arm signifies mentality *Mansika Anga*, and the right arm signifies physicality *Sharirika anga*. The array extending from the pillar through the orb to the spheroid represents the primeval masculine power known as *Sallan*. The orb represents the primeval feminine power known as *Gangara*. The Spheroid at the top represents light. As a whole, the symbol depicts the primordial creative assence that infuses the universe, which results from interaction of *Sallan* and *Gangara*. The number ‘750’ is the holy number that represents to the traditional number of the clans that comprise of the Gond community⁴.

Badadev holds significant importance for the Gond tribes in Madhya Pradesh, as he represents their spiritual beliefs, connection with nature, and cultural identity. Understanding and respecting the Gond tribes’ religious practices and beliefs can contribute to the preservation of their unique cultural heritage and inform policies that promote sustainable development and conservation in the region.

Real Owner of Nature:

The Gond tribes are closely associated with nature and they are totally depends on nature and natural resources. The Gond tribes are often referred to as the “real worshipers of Nature Prakriti”. Their deep-rooted connection with nature and their unique cultural practices have earned them this title. The Gond tribes have been living in harmony

⁴ Pandey, Anshuman (2015), Proposal to Encode the ‘Parsapen’ Symbol in Unicode, <https://www.unicode.org/L2/L2015/15111-parsapen-symbol.pdf>, page-2 accessed on 28.04.2024.

with nature for centuries, and their relationship with the environment is marked by respect, reverence, and a sense of responsibility. Their deep connection with nature, spiritual beliefs, sustainable practices, and unique cultural expressions make them the real worshipers of Nature Prakruti. Their relationship with the environment serves as an inspiration for others to adopt sustainable practices and respect the delicate balance of nature.

Gond Tribes and Agriculture:

The Gond Tribes' economy is almost depended on agricultural works. The agriculture is the major occupation of 65% of population and only 15% depends entirely on agriculture labour and remaining 20% reported non agriculture occupation. Domestic work is perceived to be the primary responsibility of women who also contribute substantially on farms for livelihood activities.⁵

During January February, local person cultivate Rai, Ramtila. In March- April, Nyuayee (Masur dal), Chana (Bengal Gram), Gehu (wheat), Alsi (native variety of oilseed), Batri (Yellow gram), Batra, Tivura. During summer i.e., May, they remain at home and prepare the agricultural equipments (generally made of woods) for next season. In June, sowing of Dhan (paddy), Kutki, Kodo (Millets), and other native variety millets taken up and will be harvested during September and October.⁶

Gond Tribes and Nature Festivals:

The Gond tribes, known for their strong connection with nature, celebrate various festivals throughout the year that honor and celebrate the natural elements and deities. The following are some important festivals in connection with nature:

1. Hareli or Hariyali Festival:

Hareli is a major festival celebrated by the Gond tribes in the monsoon season, typically during the months of July or August. This festival is dedicated to the rain god, signifying gratitude for the monsoon rains that nourish the earth and ensure a bountiful harvest. During Hareli, people offer prayers to the rain god, perform traditional dances, and sing songs in praise of nature. They also organize feasts and distribute sweets among family and friends.

2. Nagpamchami:

Nagpamchami is an important festival celebrated by the Gond tribes in Madhya Pradesh and other parts of central India. This festival is dedicated to the worship of Serpent deities, who are considered to be the guardians of nature and the environment. Nagpamchami typically falls in the month of August and is observed on the fifth day of the lunar calendar.

3. Kajari Teej:

Kajari Teej is a monsoon festival celebrated by the Gond tribes in August, dedicated to the worship of the goddess Kajari. This festival signifies the arrival of the rainy season and the importance of water for agriculture and human life. Women folk gather to sing devotional songs in praise of the goddess Kajari, seek her blessings for a bountiful harvest, and pray for the well-being of their families.

4. Nava Khana:

Nava Khawai (New Food Eating) is very famous festival in Gond tribes and it is essential for them. Nawa Khawai festival is celebrated with the welcoming of new crops which is celebrated in the month of October and November. In this festival, the Gond tribes worship their deities with awakening to them and also worship their holy tree Saja Pen or Parsapen the new paddy crops is ready. They do not start to eat new paddy rice or new crops (food) without worshiping their deities in Nawa Khawai festival.

⁵ Chadar, Dr. Mohan Lal., Socio-economic conditions of Tribal Villages of Amarkantaka Region of Madhya Pradesh, International Journal of Tribal Literature and Cultural Studies, 2016, p. 253.

⁶ Anuppur District Census Report, 2011, p. 18.

These festivals are not only celebrated in connection with nature and its bounties but also help in strengthening the social bonds within the Gond tribes and promoting their unique cultural identity. The festivals encourage the Gond tribes to maintain their deep connection with nature and continue their sustainable practices, ensuring the well-being of the environment and their communities. The Gond tribes are very happy to live within natural surroundings. They celebrate their festivals and meet with each other in their community. They are very helping nature people and they are always ready to help to others.

The Challenges to Protect Nature:

At this present scenario, the Gond tribes are facing various challenges due to modernization and Globalization, as well as protecting nature and the Gond tribes involves addressing various challenges that affect their way of life, cultural practices, beliefs and the natural environment. At present, in the name of development, we can see that uncontrolled deforestation is going on, mining works, and infrastructure development projects have led to the loss of natural habitats for both the Gond tribes and wildlife and they are forcefully displaced and threatened from their habitats. This has resulted in the displacement of communities and disrupted the delicate balance of the ecosystem. Due to the lack of awareness and education, many Gond tribes face challenges in accessing quality education and information about sustainable practices, environmental conservation, and their rights. This lack of awareness often leads to the misuse of natural resources and a weak understanding of the importance of preserving the environment. They often face socio-economic disparities, including limited access to healthcare, sanitation, and basic amenities. Climate change impacts the Gond tribes and their environment in several ways, such as altered rainfall patterns, increased temperatures, and more frequent natural disasters. These changes can lead to crop failure, water scarcity, and reduced availability of forest resources, affecting the livelihoods of the Gond tribes.

Preservation of Nature, Ecological System and Livelihood:

There is an urgent need to preserve the natural resources, ecological system and the livelihood cultural heritage of Gond tribes. For this purpose, several preservation methods can be employed. These methods should focus on promoting sustainable practices, community involvement, and the protection of the Gond tribes' cultural identity and rights. Education is the only power through which one can decide what is right and what is wrong. Govt. must provide the quality improvement education and healthcare facilities in the areas where the Gond tribes reside because they are still away from the both these essential things. This will empower them with knowledge and skills, as well as improve their overall health and well-being. As well as Govt. must be ensured that the Gond tribes' land and resource rights are protected and upheld through fair and transparent policies and legal frameworks. This can be achieved by implementing land titling programs, recognizing community forest rights, and promoting sustainable resource management practices.

We should encourage them to participate in the conservation and management of their local environment. This approach empowers the communities and helps to preserve their traditional ecological knowledge as well as motivate them to active participation in decision-making processes related to their land, resources, and development. This can be achieved through community-based organizations, local self-governance bodies, and regular consultations with tribal representatives. We should encourage sustainable development practices that respect the environment and the Gond tribes' cultural heritage by promoting eco-friendly agricultural practices, supporting renewable energy initiatives, and conserving natural resources for future generations. We should support and promote the preservation of the Gond tribes' unique cultural heritage, including their beliefs, traditions, and artistic expressions and efforts to be made the collaboration with Local Authorities and NGOs.

This collaboration can help ensure that the efforts made are culturally sensitive and responsive to the unique circumstances of the Gond tribes. By implementing these preservation methods, it is possible to protect the nature, ecology, and livelihood of the Gond Tribes in Madhya Pradesh while ensuring their rights and cultural identity are respected and preserved.

What Impacts of Modernization and Globalization:

The Gond tribes face several challenges in preserving their cultural heritage due to the influences of modernization, urbanization, and climate change. Modernization and globalization have significant impacts on the Gond Tribes and their livelihood. Modernization and urbanization lead to the loss of traditional knowledge and practices among the Gond tribes. As they adopt new technologies and ways of life, they may forget or abandon their unique cultural practices, which are essential for preserving their heritage. To negative impacts of modernization and globalization on the Gond tribes, it is essential to involve them in decision-making processes related to policies, development projects, and cultural preservation efforts.

Relevance for the Society and for the Policy making:

The present research study is very beneficial for the welfare and upliftment of Gond community and it will create the awareness among the people in the society as it contributes to cultural preservation, environmental conservation, gender equity, policy formulation, intercultural understanding, and education and awareness. By understanding the Gond tribes' cultural identity and its relationship with nature, policymakers can develop policies that support the preservation and promotion of their cultural heritage. The Gond tribes and their relationship with nature has significant relevance for policy making in various domains, such as providing education and awareness programs, supporting community-based initiatives, and promoting gender equality in decision-making processes. It is very essential to

regularly monitoring and evaluating of policies and programs aimed at conserving the Gond tribes' relationship with nature for the effectiveness of the policies. The findings can contribute to the development of evidence-based policies and practices that promote a harmonious coexistence between humans and the environment.

Expected Outcome of the Research:

The expected outcomes of research focused on preserving nature, ecology, and Gond Tribal livelihood in Madhya Pradesh can be both theoretical and practical. These outcomes will contribute to a better understanding of the challenges faced by the Gond tribes and their environment, as well as provide actionable solutions for sustainable development and conservation. The research will generate new knowledge about the Gond tribes' relationship with nature, their cultural practices, and the ecological challenges they face in Madhya Pradesh. The findings will be valuable for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners working in the fields of environmental conservation, tribal welfare, and cultural preservation.

The research findings can inform the development of more effective policies and legal frameworks that address the unique needs and rights of the Gond tribes and their environment. This may lead to better protection of their lands, resources, and cultural identity, as well as more effective conservation measures. This increased awareness can lead to greater community participation in conservation efforts and improved management of their local environment. The research can foster collaboration between various stakeholders, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, local communities, and academic institutions. Ultimately, the research and its outcomes can contribute to the long-term sustainability of the Gond tribes' livelihoods and the conservation of their environment in Madhya Pradesh. This will ensure that their unique cultural heritage and ecological knowledge are preserved for future generations.

Findings and Suggestions:

1. Education is the only power through which one can decide what is right and what is wrong. Govt. must provide the quality improvement education and healthcare facilities in the areas where the Gond tribes reside because they are still away from the both these essential things. Hence, quality education, healthcare facilities and skill development programs should be provide to the Gond tribes. This will definitely empower them with the necessary knowledge and skills to compete in the job market and contribute to the overall development of society as well as improve their overall health and well-being.
2. Developing policies and schemes that promote the preservation of the Gond tribes' cultural heritage and support sustainable livelihood strategies. These policies should be informed by the findings of the research and involve the active participation of the Gond tribes.
3. Efforts to be made for foster collaborations between local communities, government agencies, and conservation organizations to establish protected areas and promote the conservation of sacred sites and culturally significant areas within the forest.
4. To implement sustainable resource management practices that balance the needs of the Gond tribes with the conservation of forest resources. This may involve regulating the extraction of timber, non-timber forest products, and wildlife to prevent overexploitation.
5. Developing and implementing education and awareness programs to raise awareness among the Gond tribes and the broader society about the importance of preserving their cultural heritage and the environment.
6. The Govt. should provide the accessibility of technology and digital literacy programs for the Gond tribes. This will help them stay connected, access information, and participate in the digital economy.
7. The Gond tribes possess a rich cultural heritage, including unique beliefs, traditions, art, and music of their own. This highlights the importance of preserving their cultural identity for future generations and promoting appreciation for their distinct way of life.
8. We should encourage and support to the Gond tribes' local art and handicrafts as alternative sources of income and a means of preserving their cultural identity. This can be achieved through training, marketing support, and access to markets for their products.
9. The Govt. must establish long-term monitoring and evaluation systems to assess the effectiveness of implemented policies, schemes and interventions. This will help ensure their continued relevance and success and provide valuable feedback for future research and development efforts.
10. More and more research works to be dome on the Gond tribes and regions to gain a broader understanding of their cultural heritage, sustainable livelihoods, and environmental interactions. The research emphasizes the need for interdisciplinary approaches that combine cultural and ecological perspectives to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the Gond tribes' relationship with their environment.
11. Govt. should promote for entrepreneurship skills and provide access to micro-finance and other financial schemes to help the Gond tribes establish their own businesses. This will not only improve their economic status but also foster a sense of self-reliance and independence.

Conclusion:

The research highlights the importance of preserving their cultural identity and promoting sustainable practices for the well-being of both the

communities and the ecosystem. It offers a promising opportunity to gain valuable insights into the indigenous knowledge, cultural practices, and environmental conservation efforts of the Gond tribes. By introducing a community-led, interdisciplinary, and innovative approach, this research has the potential to contribute significantly to the fields of environmental conservation, tribal welfare, and cultural preservation of Gond tribes. Moreover, the research findings can serve as a valuable resource for policymakers, development organizations, and researchers to design targeted strategies for preserving the cultural heritage of other indigenous communities and promoting sustainable practices. It is crucial to continue monitoring and evaluating the implemented policies and interventions to ensure their effectiveness and adapt them as needed. This research work contributes to a deeper understanding of the Gond tribes' cultural heritage, sustainable livelihoods, and spiritual environmental interactions, paving the way for more informed and inclusive conservation efforts.

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