

Cultural Resilience And Theoretical Alignment: Juang Tribal Practices And Sociological Frameworks In Contemporary India

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Abstract

This study examines the cultural resilience of the Juang tribe of Odisha within the context of modernization, ecological change, and socio-economic transformation. Using qualitative secondary data and sociological frameworks such as cultural ecology, structuration theory, functionalism, and social-ecological resilience theory, the paper analyzes how the Juang preserve indigenous identity through adaptive practices, communal institutions, ecological knowledge, and selective engagement with modern systems. Despite challenges arising from mining, displacement, poverty, and marginalization, the community demonstrates significant adaptive capacity. The study emphasizes the importance of culturally sensitive development policies that protect tribal autonomy, ecological sustainability, and indigenous knowledge systems.

Key Words: *Juang, Cultural Resilience, Tribal Modernization, Cultural Ecology, Tribal Development, Indigenous Identity.*

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I. Introduction

The survival and continuity of indigenous cultures amid rapid modernization remain one of the most significant concerns in contemporary sociology and anthropology (Geertz, 1973; Xaxa, 2008). Across the developing world, tribal societies are increasingly confronted with multiple forces of transformation such as globalization, industrialization, urban expansion, capitalist penetration, technological diffusion, state-led development, and ecological degradation. These forces reshape traditional systems of economy, kinship, religion, political organization, and identity formation (Gadgil & Guha, 1995). In many cases, tribal communities experience severe dislocation because their traditional lifestyles are deeply dependent upon forests, local ecosystems, customary rights, and collective social structures. Consequently, modernization often produces both opportunities and crises simultaneously. In India, tribal societies occupy a particularly complex position within the broader developmental framework of the nation-state. On one hand, they are beneficiaries of constitutional safeguards, affirmative action policies, welfare schemes, and development programs. On the other hand, they are among the most marginalized populations affected by displacement, mining projects, environmental destruction, land alienation, and cultural assimilation (Hasnain, 2019). This contradiction creates a sociological paradox wherein development intended for tribal upliftment frequently becomes a source of social disruption and cultural fragmentation.

The condition becomes even more critical in the case of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). These communities are characterized by low literacy, fragile demographic conditions, subsistence economies, geographical isolation, and limited political representation (Census of India, 2011). Their socio-economic vulnerability intensifies the risk of cultural erosion and structural exclusion. Yet, despite these adversities, several tribal communities continue to preserve important dimensions of their traditional identity through adaptive social practices and cultural resilience. Among the tribal communities of India, the Juang tribe of Odisha represents a highly significant sociological case for understanding cultural continuity under changing historical conditions (Ota & Sahoo, 2008). The Juang inhabit the forested and hilly regions of Keonjhar district and have historically depended upon shifting cultivation, forest gathering, hunting, and communal labour systems. Although they have been exposed to colonial forest regulations, postcolonial development programs, educational expansion, market penetration, and industrial activities, they continue to retain important aspects of their traditional worldview, ecological ethics, ritual systems, and social institutions.

The Juang experience challenges deterministic assumptions that modernization inevitably destroys indigenous cultures. Instead, their social life demonstrates that tribal societies are not passive victims of historical change but active social actors capable of negotiating modernity while maintaining cultural continuity

(Giddens, 1984). Their adaptive responses reveal the coexistence of tradition and transformation, where elements of modern life are selectively integrated into existing cultural frameworks rather than replacing them entirely.

The concept of cultural resilience is particularly important in this context because it shifts analytical attention away from narratives of decline and disappearance toward processes of adaptation, continuity, and creative transformation (Holling, 1973). Cultural resilience refers to the ability of a community to preserve its fundamental values, symbolic systems, collective memories, and institutional structures while simultaneously responding to changing external circumstances (Berkes & Folke, 1998). It recognizes that cultures are dynamic rather than static entities. Communities survive not by rigidly resisting all change but by selectively adapting to new realities while preserving core social meanings. The Juang illustrate this resilience through their engagement with state welfare programs, educational institutions, healthcare systems, and legal rights frameworks without completely abandoning indigenous cultural practices (Swain et al., 2025). Their rituals, kinship structures, communal labour arrangements, ecological knowledge, and oral traditions continue to function as important mechanisms of social cohesion and identity formation. Such resilience demonstrates that indigenous communities possess significant adaptive capacities rooted in collective solidarity and historical experience.

From a broader sociological perspective, the study of the Juang contributes to debates on modernity, development, globalization, indigenous rights, and social transformation. It raises important questions regarding the nature of cultural survival in unequal societies, the relationship between state policies and tribal autonomy, and the role of traditional knowledge systems in sustainable development. The Juang case also highlights the importance of culturally sensitive policy approaches that recognize tribal communities not merely as backward populations requiring modernization, but as holders of valuable ecological knowledge, collective ethics, and alternative modes of social organization. Thus, the present study seeks to analyze Juang cultural practices and resilience through major sociological frameworks such as cultural ecology, structuration theory, social-ecological resilience theory, and functionalist perspectives. By doing so, the study attempts to demonstrate that tribal resilience is not merely an act of survival but an ongoing process of negotiation, reinterpretation, and selective adaptation within conditions of structural inequality and developmental change.

II. Methodological Orientation

The present study adopts a qualitative, interpretive, and analytical methodological orientation based entirely on secondary data analysis. The research does not rely upon primary field investigation but instead synthesizes existing ethnographic, anthropological, sociological, and policy-based literature related to the Juang tribe and broader tribal studies in India. Such an approach is particularly useful for understanding long-term patterns of continuity and transformation because it allows the integration of observations made by scholars, administrators, and institutions across different historical periods. The study draws extensively upon ethnographic monographs, tribal studies, governmental reports, census publications, journal articles, policy documents, and archival materials (Ota & Sahoo, 2008; Hasnain, 2019). Important institutional sources include publications of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute (SCSTRTI), Odisha, reports of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, and statistical findings from the Census of India (2011). These sources provide valuable demographic, socio-economic, cultural, and historical information regarding the Juang community.

In addition, the study incorporates scholarly literature on cultural ecology, social resilience, indigenous knowledge systems, forest governance, development-induced displacement, tribal health practices, and modernization processes (Gadgil & Guha, 1995; Berkes & Folke, 1998). Classical anthropological writings by scholars such as Dalton (1872), Elwin (1948), and Bose (1928) are also used to trace the historical evolution of Juang society and its interaction with colonial and postcolonial structures. The methodological orientation of the study is interpretive because the objective extends beyond mere descriptive documentation of tribal customs. The study seeks to theoretically interpret Juang cultural practices through established sociological frameworks including Durkheimian functionalism, Giddens' structuration theory, cultural ecology, and resilience theory. In this sense, the research combines empirical secondary evidence with conceptual analysis to develop a broader sociological understanding of tribal adaptation and continuity.

III. Ethnographic And Socio-Historical Profile Of The Juang Tribe

The Juang are one of the indigenous tribal communities of Odisha and belong to the Austroasiatic linguistic family associated with the Munda language group (Ota & Sahoo, 2008). They are primarily concentrated in the forested and hilly regions of Keonjhar district, particularly in areas such as Banspal, Telkoi, and Harichandanpur blocks. Smaller populations are also found in parts of Angul and Dhenkanal districts (Mohapatra et al., 2023). Their geographical isolation historically enabled the preservation of distinct cultural practices, traditional ecological knowledge, and relatively autonomous social institutions. The surrounding

forests, hills, and rivers have played a central role in shaping Juang economic life, cosmology, and collective identity.

The Juang are officially recognized as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG), a category reserved for tribal communities characterized by pre-agricultural technology, low literacy levels, stagnant or declining populations, and subsistence-based economies (Census of India, 2011). Historically, the Juang practiced shifting cultivation, hunting, fishing, and forest gathering as their primary means of subsistence (Dalton, 1872; Elwin, 1948). Forest produce such as roots, tubers, fruits, medicinal plants, honey, and firewood constituted important components of their livelihood system. Traditional Juang society was organized around kinship ties, clan systems, communal rituals, and reciprocal labour arrangements (Bose, 1928). Social relations were strongly guided by collective norms, customary laws, and communal decision-making processes led by village elders and traditional authorities. Colonial forest laws disrupted traditional access to forests and gradually undermined shifting cultivation systems (Gadgil & Guha, 1995). Restrictions imposed by the colonial state weakened indigenous resource management practices and increased economic dependence upon settled agriculture and wage labour. Postcolonial development policies further transformed Juang livelihoods through agricultural settlement programs, road construction, welfare schemes, educational expansion, and integration into regional labour markets (Behera, 1992). Simultaneously, increasing interaction with non-tribal populations introduced new cultural influences, consumption patterns, and socio-economic aspirations, thereby reshaping traditional Juang society in significant ways.

IV. Conceptualizing Cultural Resilience In Tribal Contexts

Cultural resilience refers to the capacity of communities to sustain core aspects of their cultural identity despite external pressures, disruptions, or transformations (Berkes & Folke, 1998). Unlike static understandings of tradition, resilience emphasizes adaptability, flexibility, and creative continuity (Holling, 1973). In tribal contexts, cultural resilience is deeply connected to ecological knowledge, collective memory, ritual systems, and social solidarity (Geertz, 1973). It also involves the preservation of indigenous languages, oral histories, customary laws, and symbolic practices that reinforce collective identity across generations. Cultural resilience enables communities to reinterpret traditions in changing contexts rather than abandoning them entirely.

The Juang case demonstrates that resilience is not synonymous with resistance to all forms of change. Rather, it involves selective engagement with modern institutions (Giddens, 1984). For example, while the community increasingly participates in formal education and state welfare programs, many traditional practices continue to shape everyday life (Ota & Sahoo, 2008). Ritual festivals, communal labour systems, kinship obligations, and indigenous healing practices continue to influence social organization despite increasing interaction with external institutions. This coexistence of continuity and transformation challenges binary distinctions between “traditional” and “modern” societies. Instead, it suggests that modernity is experienced differently by tribal communities through processes of adaptation and cultural negotiation.

Sociologically, resilience must also be understood in relation to power structures. Tribal adaptation occurs within unequal systems shaped by state authority, capitalist expansion, and cultural domination (Xaxa, 2008). Consequently, resilience is not merely a cultural phenomenon but also a political and economic process. The struggle to protect land rights, forest access, and cultural autonomy reflects broader issues of social justice and indigenous self-determination. In this context, cultural resilience becomes a mechanism through which tribal communities preserve dignity, identity, and collective survival amidst conditions of structural marginalization and developmental pressure.

V. Cultural Ecology And Juang Environmental Practices

Cultural ecology provides a valuable framework for analyzing the relationship between Juang culture and the natural environment (Gadgil & Guha, 1995). Traditional Juang life is deeply embedded within forest ecosystems. Their agricultural practices, food habits, medicinal knowledge, ritual beliefs, and seasonal activities are closely synchronized with ecological rhythms (Biswal et al., 1997). The natural environment is not merely a physical setting for economic activity but forms the foundation of social organization, religious belief, and cultural identity within Juang society. Seasonal changes influence agricultural cycles, ritual observances, food collection patterns, and communal festivals, thereby integrating ecological processes with everyday social life.

Forests are not viewed merely as economic resources but as sacred spaces inhabited by spiritual forces and ancestral presences (Elwin, 1948). Such beliefs encourage restraint, reciprocity, and respect toward nature. Sacred groves, ritual sites, and ancestral spaces function as symbolic mechanisms for environmental conservation and collective memory. The Juang traditionally practiced shifting cultivation or podu chasa, which involved rotational use of land to maintain ecological balance (Dalton, 1872). Unlike exploitative forms of intensive agriculture, this system allowed soil regeneration and minimized long-term environmental degradation when practiced within traditional ecological limits.

Knowledge regarding medicinal plants, water sources, soil fertility, and seasonal cycles remains an important part of community life (Sahoo et al., 2023). Elderly members and traditional healers play a crucial role in transmitting this ecological knowledge across generations through oral traditions and practical learning. Indigenous environmental knowledge also contributes to local healthcare practices, biodiversity preservation, and sustainable resource utilization. However, ecological resilience among the Juang faces severe challenges due to deforestation, mining expansion, and industrial development in Keonjhar district (Gadgil & Guha, 1995). Large-scale extraction of mineral resources has disrupted forest ecosystems, reduced access to traditional livelihood resources, and weakened the cultural relationship between the community and its environment. Consequently, ecological degradation threatens not only economic survival but also the cultural continuity and social cohesion of Juang society.

VI. Majang Institution And Communal Solidarity

The majang, or youth dormitory system, constitutes one of the most distinctive institutions of Juang society (Ota & Sahoo, 2008). Traditionally, it functions as a communal space where young men and women receive socialization, cultural education, and moral training. It also serves as a centre for transmitting oral traditions, folk songs, dances, myths, and indigenous knowledge from older generations to youth. Through participation in collective activities, younger members gradually internalize the norms, responsibilities, and cultural expectations of the community. From a sociological perspective, the majang serves multiple functions. Structurally, it promotes social integration by strengthening group cohesion and intergenerational continuity (Durkheim, 1912/1995). Functionally, it acts as an informal educational institution where youth learn practical skills, cultural values, and communal ethics. Activities such as collective dancing, festival preparation, agricultural cooperation, and ritual participation reinforce shared identity and emotional solidarity within the group. The majang also regulates social behaviour by encouraging discipline, cooperation, and respect for communal authority.

The importance of the majang can also be interpreted through Durkheim's concept of collective consciousness, where communal rituals reinforce solidarity and belonging (Durkheim, 1912/1995). The institution symbolizes the collective life of the community and functions as a cultural mechanism for preserving tribal identity. Even though modernization has altered the traditional functioning of the majang, its symbolic significance persists through festivals, dances, and communal gatherings (Ota & Sahoo, 2008). The decline of traditional dormitory practices due to formal education, migration, and changing lifestyles has not completely eliminated its cultural relevance. Instead, the majang continues to represent communal unity, cultural continuity, and the collective heritage of Juang society.

VII. Structuration Theory And Juang Agency

Anthony Giddens' structuration theory offers a useful analytical framework for understanding the relationship between agency and structure in Juang society (Giddens, 1984). According to Giddens, social structures simultaneously constrain and enable human action, while individuals reproduce or transform these structures through everyday practices. Structures such as laws, institutions, economic systems, and administrative mechanisms shape the opportunities available to individuals, yet human beings are not passive recipients of these forces. Through conscious action, negotiation, and adaptation, communities continuously reinterpret and reshape social realities. This perspective is particularly valuable for analyzing tribal societies undergoing rapid socio-economic transformation.

The Juang experience illustrates this duality clearly. State policies, forest laws, market relations, and development programs impose structural constraints upon tribal life. Restrictions on forest access, changing land relations, wage labour dependency, and administrative interventions have altered traditional economic and social systems. Simultaneously, the Juang actively negotiate these structures through adaptive strategies and collective action (Swain et al., 2025). They selectively participate in welfare schemes, educational institutions, and labour markets while continuing to preserve communal rituals, kinship systems, and ecological knowledge. Such responses demonstrate that tribal communities possess agency and are capable of shaping developmental processes according to local priorities and cultural values.

A significant example is the community's engagement with the Forest Rights Act (Government of India, 2006). Many Juang communities have utilized this legislation to secure access to traditional habitats and assert collective claims over forests (Swain et al., 2025). Through participation in local governance structures, community mobilization, and legal awareness campaigns, they have attempted to reclaim customary rights historically weakened by colonial and postcolonial forest regulations. This process reflects the dynamic interaction between state structures and indigenous agency. Rather than remaining passive subjects of governance, the Juang actively reinterpret legal frameworks to defend livelihood security, cultural autonomy, and ecological rights. Their experience illustrates how tribal resilience emerges not only through cultural continuity but also through strategic engagement with modern institutional systems.

VIII. Health Practices And Selective Modernization

Health practices among the Juang illustrate the coexistence of indigenous knowledge systems and biomedical modernity (Choudhury, 1964). Traditional healing methods continue to play an important role in addressing illness, spiritual imbalance, and psychological distress. Health within Juang society is often understood holistically, where physical well-being is closely connected with spiritual harmony, community relationships, and ecological balance. Consequently, diseases may be interpreted not only as biological conditions but also as outcomes of supernatural influences, ancestral displeasure, or social imbalance. Ritual healing, herbal remedies, and spiritual practices therefore remain significant components of the indigenous healthcare system.

Traditional healers possess extensive knowledge of medicinal plants and local therapeutic practices (Sahoo et al., 2023). Their expertise includes the use of roots, leaves, bark, and forest herbs for treating fever, wounds, digestive disorders, and other common illnesses. Such knowledge has historically developed through close interaction with forest ecosystems and has been transmitted orally across generations. Traditional healers also perform ritual practices intended to restore psychological confidence and social harmony within the community. At the same time, increasing interaction with state healthcare systems has transformed health-seeking behaviour (Kanrar & Goswami, 2020). Government hospitals, vaccination programs, maternal healthcare services, and public health campaigns have gradually expanded biomedical awareness among the Juang population.

This coexistence represents a form of medical pluralism. Rather than abandoning traditional systems, the Juang integrate multiple healthcare approaches depending on the nature of illness and accessibility of services (Kanrar & Goswami, 2020). Minor illnesses may initially be treated through indigenous remedies, while severe conditions often lead individuals to seek biomedical treatment. Such hybridity reflects adaptive pragmatism rather than cultural disintegration. It demonstrates the community's ability to selectively combine traditional and modern healthcare systems in ways that preserve cultural continuity while responding to contemporary medical needs. At the same time, inadequate healthcare infrastructure, poverty, malnutrition, and geographical isolation continue to create significant health challenges for the Juang community.

IX. Social-Ecological Resilience And Adaptive Capacity

Social-ecological resilience theory emphasizes the capacity of communities to absorb disturbances, adapt to changing conditions, and reorganize while maintaining core functions and identity (Holling, 1973; Berkes & Folke, 1998). The theory highlights the interconnectedness between social systems and ecological systems, arguing that community survival depends upon flexibility, adaptive learning, and collective response mechanisms. In tribal societies, resilience is often rooted in communal solidarity, ecological knowledge, customary institutions, and shared cultural values that enable communities to cope with environmental and economic uncertainties. The Juang have responded to ecological degradation and economic insecurity through diversification of livelihoods, including settled agriculture, wage labour, forest produce collection, and seasonal migration (Mohapatra et al., 2023). In many households, dependence on a single economic activity has gradually been replaced by multiple survival strategies aimed at reducing vulnerability. Community solidarity, kinship networks, and reciprocal labour arrangements further strengthen resilience (Bose, 1928). Collective participation in agricultural activities, food sharing, and mutual support during crises continue to function as important mechanisms of social security. Such cooperative structures reduce the risks associated with poverty, crop failure, and livelihood instability.

Importantly, resilience should not be romanticized. The Juang continue to face poverty, educational disadvantage, food insecurity, and infrastructural exclusion (Census of India, 2011). Limited access to healthcare, transportation, quality education, and stable employment opportunities continues to constrain long-term socio-economic mobility. Environmental degradation caused by mining and deforestation has also weakened traditional livelihood systems and ecological sustainability. Nevertheless, their adaptive strategies demonstrate significant social creativity and institutional flexibility. The ability to combine traditional knowledge with new economic opportunities reflects a dynamic process of survival and adaptation rather than passive endurance. From a sociological perspective, the Juang case illustrates how marginalized communities actively reorganize social and economic life in response to structural pressures while preserving important aspects of collective identity and cultural continuity.

X. Challenges Of Modernization And Structural Marginalization

Despite their adaptive resilience, the Juang face multiple structural challenges arising from contemporary development processes (Xaxa, 2008). The expansion of mining activities, industrial projects, and infrastructural development in Keonjhar district has significantly altered the ecological and social environment of the region. Mining expansion has led to deforestation, environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity, and displacement from traditional habitats (Gadgil & Guha, 1995). Since Juang livelihoods are closely connected

with forests and local ecosystems, ecological destruction directly affects food security, access to forest produce, traditional healthcare resources, and cultural practices associated with sacred landscapes. Displacement and land alienation also weaken communal solidarity and disrupt traditional patterns of social organization.

Educational marginalization remains another major issue. Although literacy rates have improved, access to quality education remains limited due to poverty, language barriers, inadequate infrastructure, and geographical isolation (Census of India, 2011). Many Juang children encounter difficulties in formal schooling because educational systems are often based on non-tribal languages and culturally unfamiliar curricula. High dropout rates, limited educational resources, and economic pressures frequently compel children to participate in wage labour or household economic activities. As a result, educational inclusion remains uneven and insufficient for achieving meaningful socio-economic mobility. Economic vulnerability, exploitation by intermediaries, and unstable wage labour further constrain socio-economic advancement (Mohapatra et al., 2023). Dependence on seasonal employment and low-paid manual labour creates conditions of economic insecurity and indebtedness. Market penetration has also increased dependence on external traders and contractors who often exploit tribal labour and forest resources for profit. Simultaneously, changing consumption patterns and monetization of the local economy have reduced traditional forms of self-sufficiency.

From a critical sociological perspective, these conditions reflect broader patterns of uneven development and internal colonialism (Xaxa, 2008). Tribal regions rich in natural resources frequently become sites of extraction-oriented development where economic benefits are concentrated among corporate and urban interests while indigenous populations bear the social and ecological costs. Such processes reinforce structural inequality by marginalizing tribal voices within policy-making and development planning. Consequently, modernization among the Juang is experienced not merely as progress but also as a process marked by exclusion, dispossession, and cultural vulnerability.

XI. Policy Implications And Culturally Sensitive Development

The Juang case underscores the necessity of culturally sensitive development policies that recognize indigenous agency, collective identity, and institutional autonomy (Hasnain, 2019). Development approaches based solely on economic indicators often fail to address the cultural, ecological, and social realities of tribal communities. Therefore, sustainable tribal development requires policies that are participatory, decentralized, and respectful of indigenous knowledge systems. Participatory governance is essential because tribal communities possess valuable experiential knowledge regarding local ecology, resource management, and community welfare. Inclusion of tribal representatives in planning and decision-making processes can strengthen democratic participation and improve policy effectiveness.

Protection of land and forest rights remains particularly crucial. Effective implementation of the Forest Rights Act can help secure livelihood resources and reinforce community autonomy (Government of India, 2006). Recognition of community forest rights is important not only for economic survival but also for preserving cultural identity, ecological practices, and traditional social organization. Secure access to forests enables communities to sustain traditional occupations, medicinal practices, and ritual systems closely connected with the natural environment. Furthermore, preventing exploitative land acquisition and environmentally destructive mining activities is necessary for ensuring ecological justice and long-term tribal welfare.

Educational policies should incorporate indigenous languages, oral traditions, ecological knowledge, and culturally relevant curricula (Geertz, 1973). Tribal education systems often fail because they impose externally designed models disconnected from local realities and cultural experiences. Inclusion of tribal history, folklore, environmental knowledge, and local cultural practices within school curricula can improve educational participation and reduce alienation among tribal children. Bilingual education and community-based teaching approaches may also help bridge the gap between formal education and indigenous identity.

Similarly, healthcare interventions must integrate respect for traditional healing systems with expansion of biomedical services (Kanrar & Goswami, 2020). Public health programs should recognize the importance of indigenous medical knowledge and collaborate with traditional healers wherever appropriate. Expansion of healthcare infrastructure, maternal health services, nutrition programs, and disease prevention initiatives is essential in remote tribal regions. At the same time, culturally insensitive healthcare delivery may create distrust and reduce community participation. Therefore, effective tribal healthcare requires a balanced approach combining biomedical advancement with respect for local beliefs, practices, and therapeutic traditions.

Overall, culturally sensitive development must move beyond paternalistic welfare models toward approaches based on rights, participation, ecological sustainability, and cultural dignity. Such policies can strengthen both socio-economic development and the preservation of indigenous identity among the Juang and other tribal communities in India.

XII. An Overview

The Juang tribe of Odisha represents a powerful example of cultural resilience in contemporary India. Despite sustained pressures arising from modernization, ecological degradation, market penetration, and state intervention, the community continues to preserve significant dimensions of its cultural identity through adaptive strategies and communal solidarity (Ota & Sahoo, 2008). Traditional institutions, ecological knowledge, kinship relations, ritual practices, and collective values continue to shape social life even under conditions of rapid socio-economic transformation. This demonstrates that tribal cultures are not static remnants of the past but dynamic systems capable of responding creatively to historical change. Theoretical frameworks such as cultural ecology, structuration theory, and social-ecological resilience theory provide valuable insights into this process (Giddens, 1984; Holling, 1973; Berkes & Folke, 1998). These perspectives reveal that Juang resilience is not a static preservation of tradition but an active process of negotiation, reinterpretation, and selective adaptation. The Juang simultaneously engage with modern institutions such as education, healthcare, welfare schemes, and legal frameworks while maintaining important indigenous cultural practices and community-based systems of organization. Their experience challenges simplistic assumptions that modernization necessarily results in complete cultural assimilation or disappearance.

At the same time, resilience exists within conditions of structural inequality. Environmental destruction, economic marginalization, educational exclusion, inadequate healthcare access, and weak policy implementation continue to threaten tribal well-being (Xaxa, 2008). The expansion of mining activities and resource extraction in tribal regions has intensified displacement, ecological insecurity, and livelihood vulnerability. Consequently, tribal resilience should not be romanticized as effortless survival but understood as a continuous struggle against structural disadvantage and socio-economic exclusion. Addressing these challenges requires development approaches grounded in cultural sensitivity, ecological sustainability, democratic participation, and social justice. Policies must recognize tribal communities as active participants in development rather than passive beneficiaries of welfare. Greater emphasis should be placed on protecting land rights, strengthening indigenous education systems, preserving ecological resources, and promoting participatory governance. Ultimately, the Juang case highlights the broader sociological importance of balancing modernization with cultural diversity, environmental ethics, and indigenous autonomy in contemporary India.

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