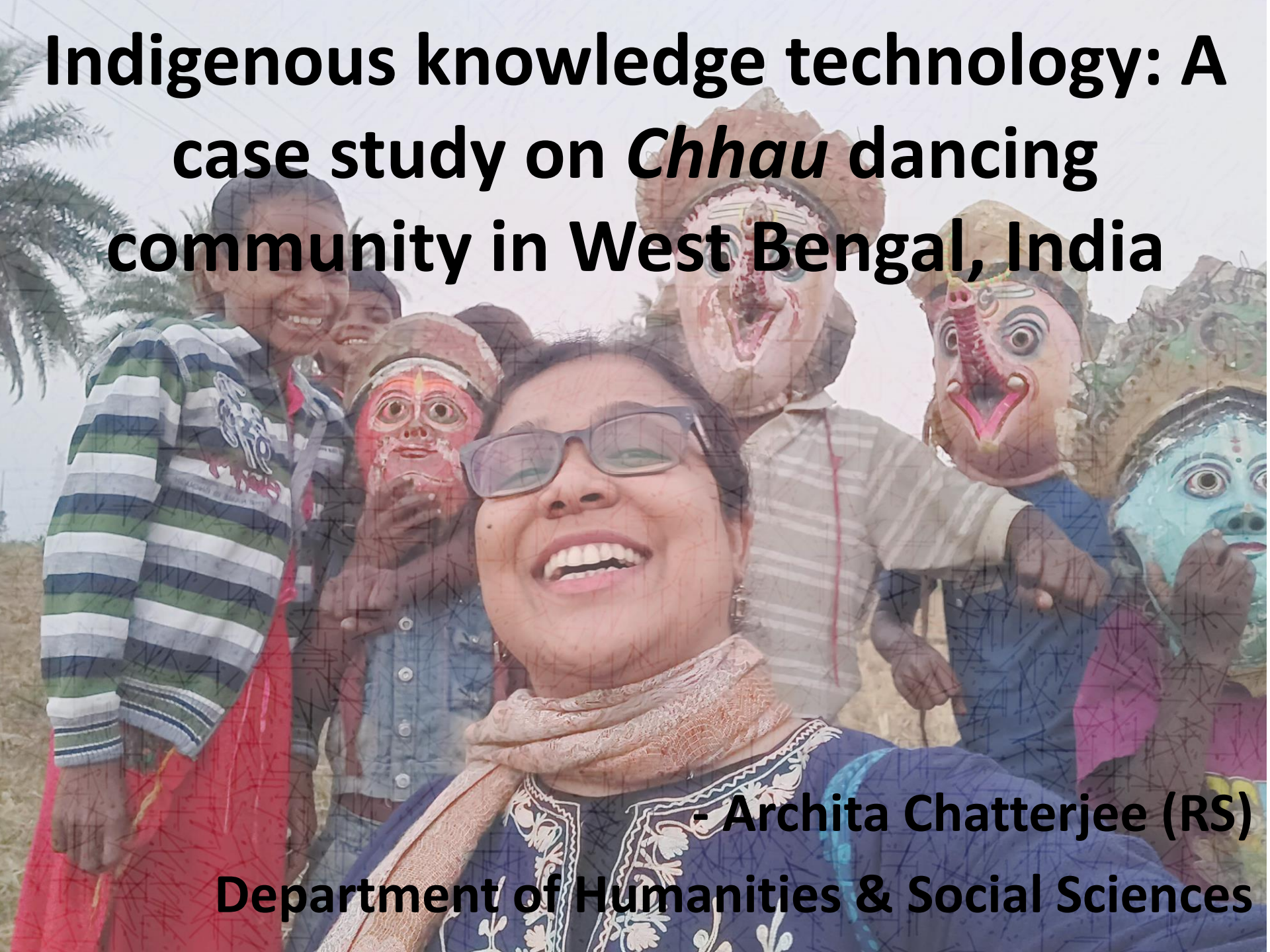


Indigenous knowledge technology: A case study on *Chhau* dancing community in West Bengal, India



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Indigenous knowledge & technology

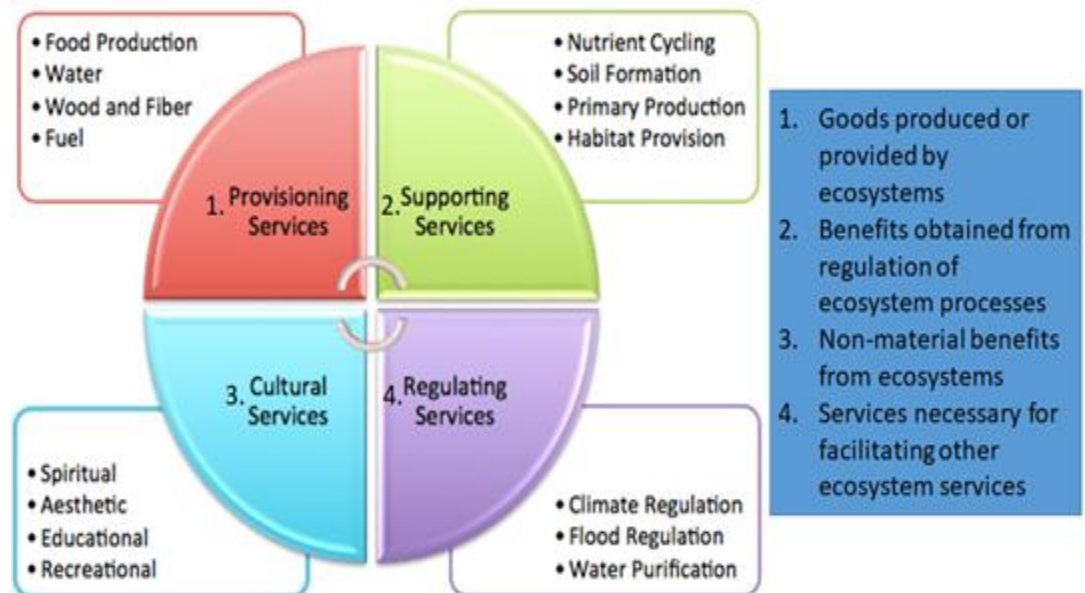
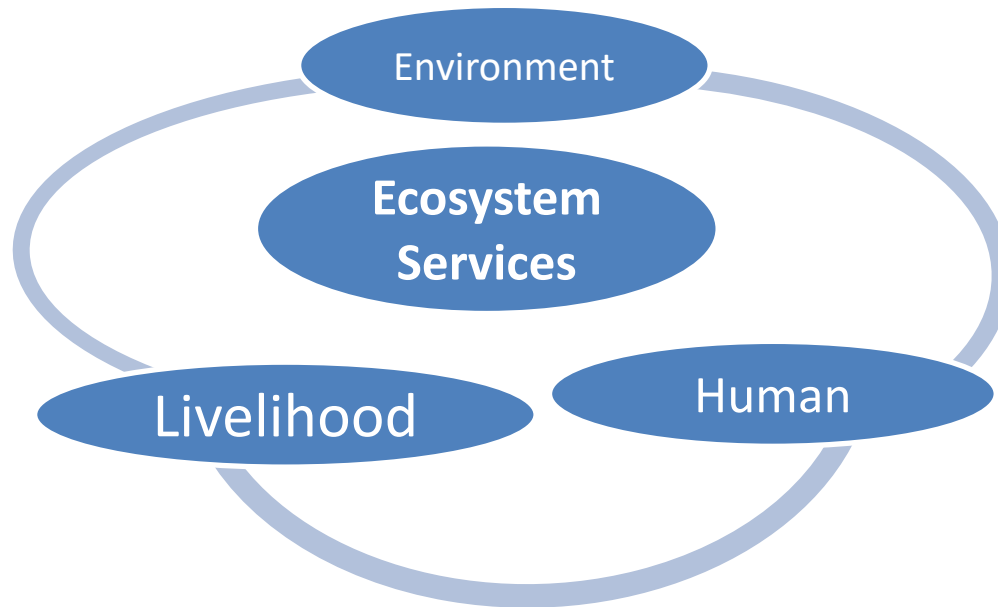
“Stored in peoples' memories and activities and is expressed in stories, songs, folklore, proverbs, dances, myths, cultural values, beliefs, rituals, community laws, local language and taxonomy, agricultural practices, equipment, materials, plant species, and animal breeds. Indigenous knowledge is shared and communicated orally, by specific example, and through culture. Indigenous forms of communication and organization are vital to local level decision making processes and to the preservation, development, and spread of Indigenous knowledge.” (200)

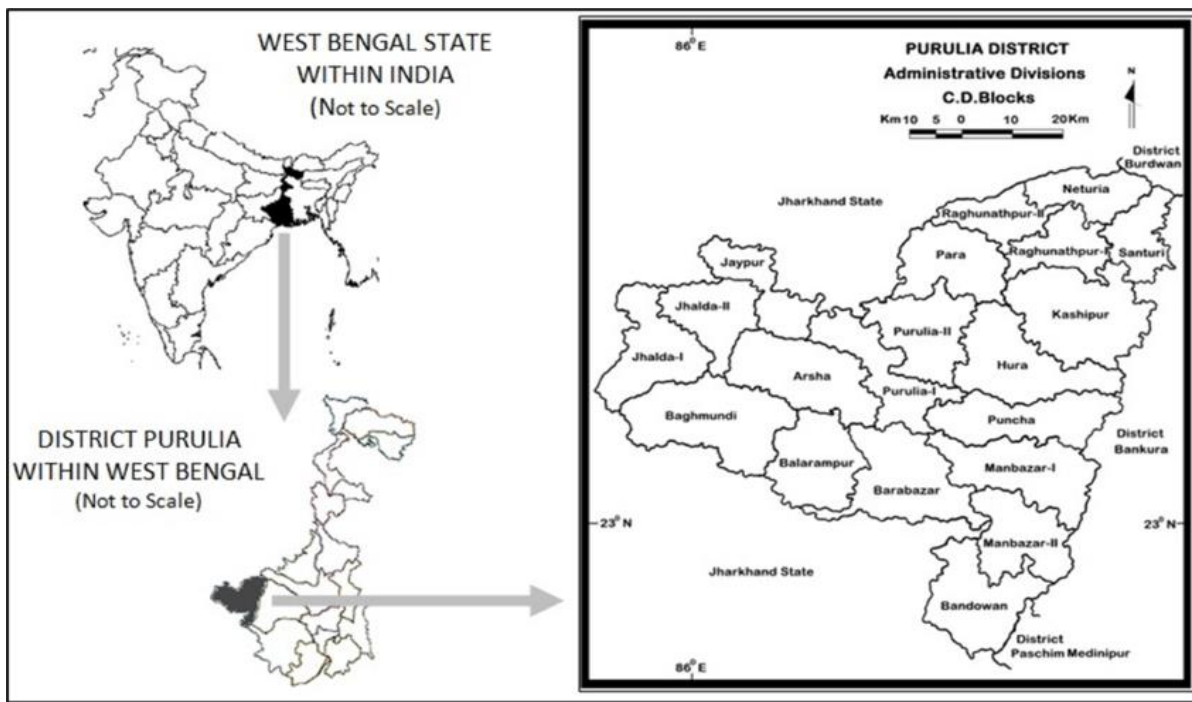
- Louise Grenier (1998), *Working with Indigenous Knowledge: A Guide for Researchers*. Ottawa ON: International Development Research Centre.

- From colonization to environmental policy formulation, the role of the indigenous people was immense from the time immemorial. The legacy of the 15th century European colonial domination had situated IK as the ‘primitive’, ‘simple’ & ‘not at all knowledge to be shared’. They had not only derogated the value but also extensively exploited the indigenous resources across the temporal and also spatial scales by imposing and over-imposing the ‘White man’s burden’ theory over the colonized.
- The indigenous population had a deep mystical relationship with the natural world. These cultural practices maintain a balance between the human and the nature
 - to have the power and control over the resources and
 - control over the social relations.
- Gradually, with the turning of the era, they have found out several survival strategies in order to protect and preserve their resources.

Ecosystem Services

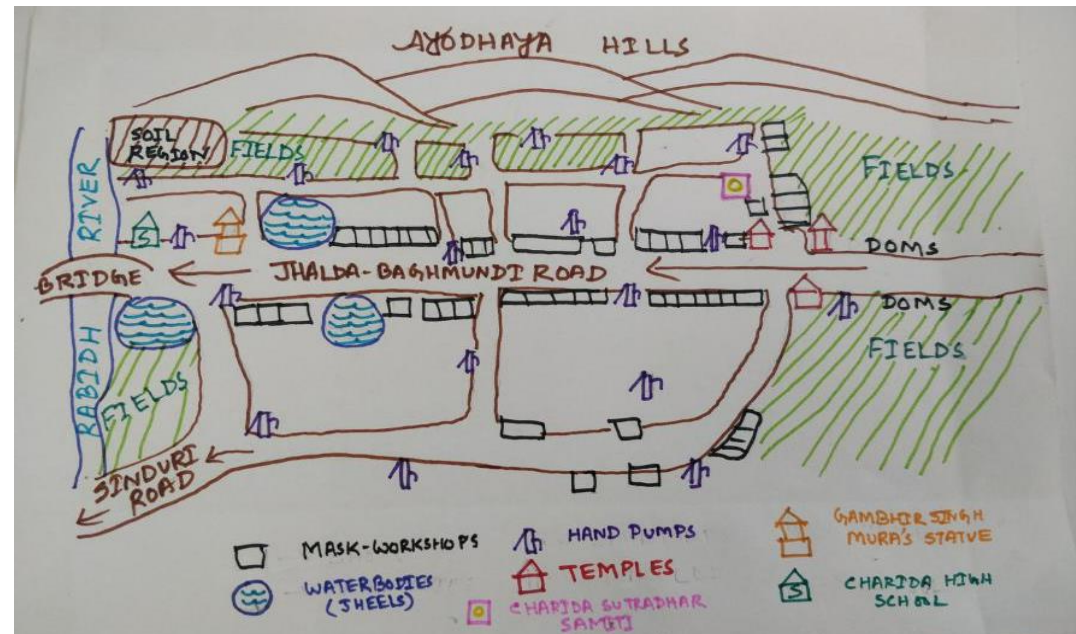
Millennium ecosystem assessment , 2005





***Location of the
Chhau dancing
community ,
West Bengal***

**Mask-village of
Charida,
Baghmundi block,
Purulia**

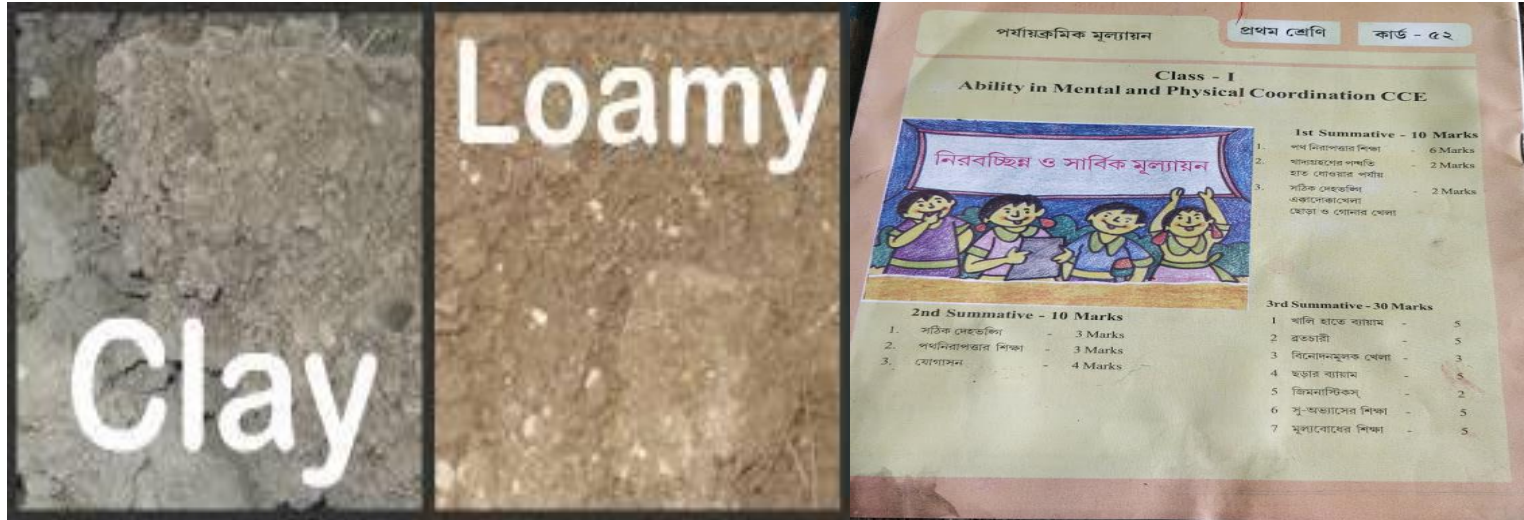


Chhau dancing community

- Included in the list of the UNESCO's Intangible cultural heritage in 2010.
- Intangible features: vigorous acrobatic stunts like breath taking somersaults, jumps and energetic shaking - performed by indigenous communities.
- 'Primitive war dance' by Dr. Ashutosh Bhattacharya.
- Dancers and mask-makers-dancing community




Ecosystem resources for mask making





Nature -based art: Mask making initiatives

Compiled from qualitative narratives and observations (2017-2020)

Ecosystem resources	Places of abstraction	Uses	Historical specificities	Transition	Colour	Source
					Red	barks, roots, insects, terracotta soil, etc.
Water	Deep tubewells, wells, nearby Rabidh river	Model making	Earlier water was taken mainly from the rivers flowing nearby Sakha river and Rabidh river, Anandanagar and Badhu tola streams.	Due to the increase of mask production as well as with the construction of tube wells, wells by the government, the mask makers are now using groundwater from these constructions only	Blue	indigo (neel), flowers and seeds of the Aparajita plant
					Yellow	Turmeric (holud), kamela, tesu, marigold and dolu.
					Green	leaves of the hyacinth bean plant and wood apple
					White	conch-shell powder, white mud
					Grey	soot of earthen ovens
					Black	soot of clay pots; rice (burnt and pounded into powdered form and added to home-made glue); (burnt) roots of velvet apple trees
Soil	2 bigha of soil region is located near the Rabidh river	Model making; mixed with water	Different types of clay like red clay, yellow clay and khari mati are also used.	No such change but the 2 bighas land is undertaken by the Charida Sutradhar Samiti from 2018 with the help of the NGO, Banglanatok.com and the Government of West Bengal		
Hot and arid climate	--	Drying and baking of the mask	--	--		
Sunlight	--	Drying and baking of the mask	--	--		

Process of making the *Chhau* mask



Navigating through shifting temporalities

Compiled from qualitative narratives and observations
(2017-2020)

- Shift from natural to non-natural
- Cheap and extensive availability of the non-natural artificial colours
- Infusion of Western culture
- Variations in masks making
- Passion to profession interface
- Unseen and untold clashes between sutradhars and non-sutradhars
- Shifting towards non-natural led to the maintenance of biodiversity
- Increase in the number of sutradhars within a family
- Inclusion of non-sutradhars
- Production and sale takes place round the year
- Inclusion of Charida as the eco-tourism village led to the influx of tourism round the year
- Transmission of traditional knowledge of mask making from old to new generation



Thank you