Jai Ho to Kulai Sing for teaching in tribal language

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Shanti is an 11-year-old Kolha tribal child, whose mother tongue is Ho. Shanti's soft singsong voice is the sound of change in this community. In her home on the outskirts of the Similipal National Park in Mayurbhanj district, education has a central place in family life. For a while, the child is wrapped in her own world, reading aloud from an Odia textbook, a language she has newly learnt to read and write in.

Meet the teacher who made this transition possible for Shanti & her friends. His name is Kulai Sing Sundi and he is Shanti's schoolteacher.

Seeing Kulai in his classroom is like watching a magician perform before a group of entranced children. Kulai has a teaching rhythm that has his students hooked throughout the day. He sends them out to collect different types of leaves that will be used as teaching aids. He talks about plants, animals and insects that the children recognise, drawing on the familiar to create confidence in the children before he introduces new concepts. A classroom interaction is followed by an outdoor memory game, which finishes with songs and clapping. Children learn through play and laughter. For Kulai, every interaction with the children is a stand-up act that leaves his audience satiated, entertained and informed.
Read the full story from The Hindu that first appeared on April 23, 2016. Natasha Badhwar’s words are wonderfully supported by Sumit Sharma’s photographs of the learners.

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