



KOLHA

**Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes
Research and Training Institute
(SCSTRTI), C.R.P. Square, Bhubaneswar-751003**

2018

PREFACE

Documenting and producing photo hand books on different Schedule Tribes of Odisha including the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups is a pioneering step undertaken by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute. The present handbook is one such photographic representation of the socio-cultural life of the tribal community known as KOL / KOLHA concluding with various planned changes in their present way of life.

The 'Kol / Kolha' is a Kolarian tribe belonging to the same stock of Munda and synonymous to the tribe called Ho. The Kol, Kolha and Ho, though one and the same tribe, they have been notified separately at Sl. Nos. 33, 35 and 23 in the Scheduled Tribe list of Odisha. They are mainly concentrated in the Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar and Baleswar districts of Odisha. As per 2011 census, the populations of Ho, Kol and Kolha in Odisha are 80 608, 4058 and 6 25 009 respectively. Thus numerically they constitute one of the major tribes of the state.

The Kols generally live in multiethnic villages in separate hamlets. A typical Kol settlement is conspicuous by the sight of large tombstones commemorating their ancestors at different places of the village. The other landmarks of a typical Ho settlement are *Akhara*, the dancing arena at the centre of the village and '*Sarana*' the sacred grove of the village deities called '*Desauli*' located at the village outskirts. Like other tribes of Odisha they believe in existence of a number of gods and goddesses, ghosts, spirits, ancestors, witches etc. '*Bonga*' is the generic term for all gods and goddesses. *Sing Bonga* or Sun god is their supreme deity.

They are settled agriculturists. Besides, they also depend on food gathering by seasonal forest collections, animal domestication, hunting and fishing to supplement their livelihood. In recent times due to multifarious development interventions, both by the Government and Non-government agencies, the Kols are undergoing a phase of transition. But they are struggling hard to retain their time tested values, customs and traditions.

I extend my sincere thanks to Shri S.C. Mohanty, Consultant (R&P) and Shri P.K. Samal, Research Assistant of SCSTRTI who have helped in producing this colorful photo handbook. I hope this book will be interesting and useful for the researchers, tourists, academicians, laymen and everyone who are interested about our tribal culture.

Prof. (Dr.) A.B. Ota
Director (SCSTRTI) &
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KOLHA

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IDENTITY

Ethnographic studies reveal that Kol / Kolha, Larka-Kol and Ho, as they are called in different localities, are the names of one and the same tribe. The tribe belongs to the great Kolarian race to which many major tribes of Odisha like Bhuyan, Birhor, Juang, Kharia, Munda, Santal, etc belong. The stronghold of the tribe lies in the Kolhan division in Singbhum district of the neighbouring Jharkhand state besides which they are

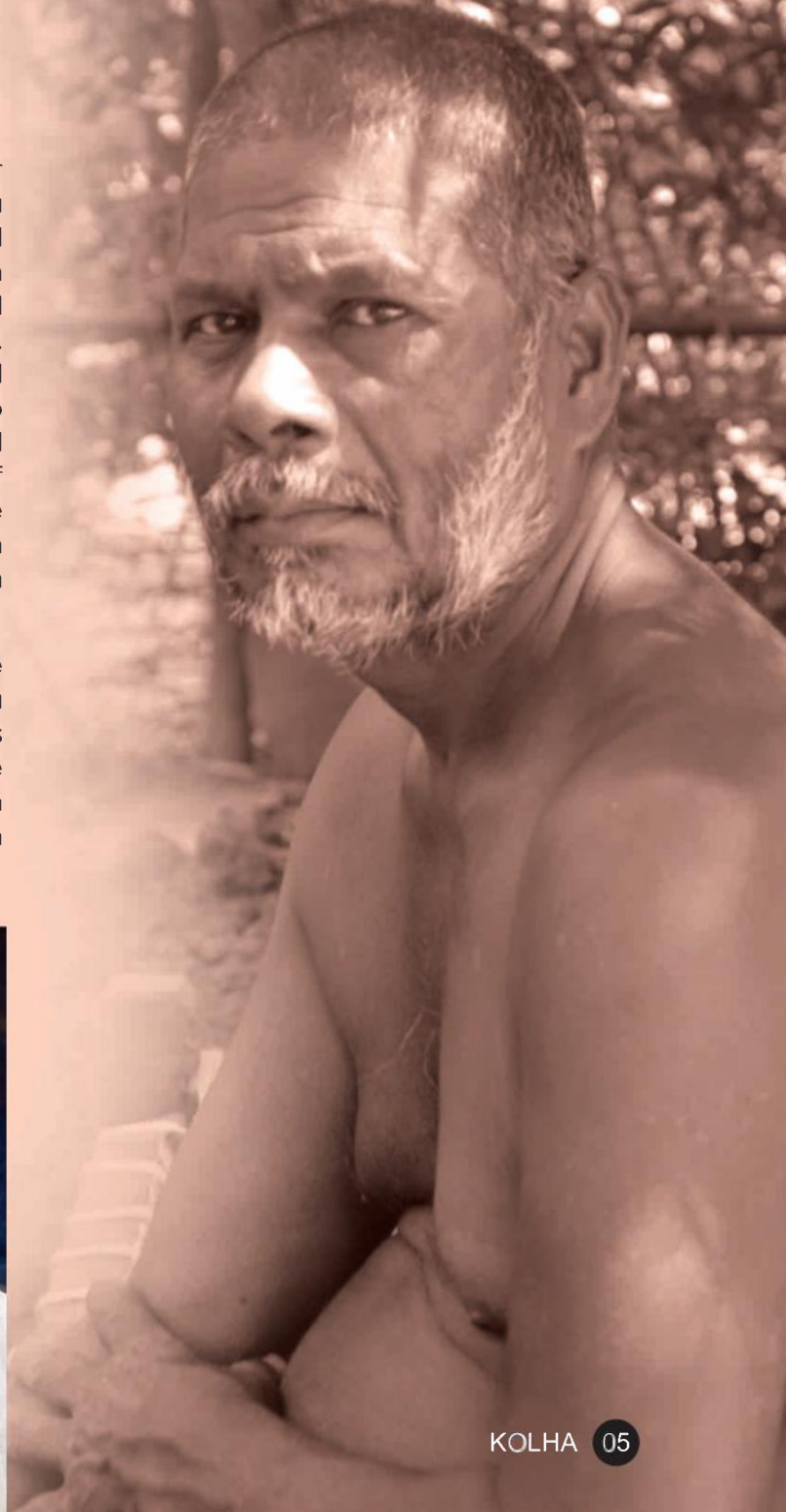
distributed in the adjacent areas of Bihar, Odisha, West Bengal and Chhattisgarh.

But the confusion about their separate ethnic identity is created because of the fact that Kol, Kolha and Ho have been notified as separate communities at serial numbers 33, 35 and 23 in the Scheduled Tribes list of Odisha. Similarly, in the states of Bihar and Jharkhand where the tribe's homeland lies, the Ho and Kol

have also been notified as separate Scheduled Tribe communities. Besides, they have been scheduled as Kol in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and as Ho in West Bengal. While they are called Kol in Bihar, they are called Ho, Kol, Kolha in Odisha. The tribesmen prefer to be identified in the name of Ho rather than Kol / Kolha which they consider to be derogatory.

The Kolha, Kol, Ho constitute one of the largest Scheduled Tribes in the states of Madhya Pradesh (undivided), Odisha and Maharashtra. When they were in the Kolhan region, the Aryans invaded northern India and the tribals living there left the Gangetic plain. Of course, there is hardly any recorded evidence to prove that, but their migration to neighbouring districts of Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar is based on the statement of members of the tribe. Even now, their marriage circle extends well into Jharkhand, which supports the statement of their migration from Jharkhand to Odisha.

In the pages of Indian history, the Kols are famous for their martial character. Rana Pratap fought Moghuls with the help of Kols and Bhils. Before and after independence the Kols had their brave encounter with British troops, during a series of tribal insurrections in Chhotnagpur region.



This tribe mostly inhabits the mining and industrial belt of the Bihar-Odisha border and has been exposed to the forces of industrialization since the beginning of the 20th century. In Odisha they are mainly concentrated in the Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar and Baleswar districts. As per 2011 census, the populations of Ho, Kol and Kolha in Odisha are 80 608, 4058 and 6 25 009 respectively. Thus numerically they constitute one of the major tribes of the state. The literacy rates of Ho, Kol and Kolha are 44.79%, 46.26% and 42.23% respectively. Their mother tongue is "Kol" - a Mundari language.

Racially, the tribe belongs to the Proto-Australoid stock. By their physical characteristics, they are of short or medium stature, dark complexion with broad and flat nose, dark brown eyes, straight or wavy black hair and narrow chin. But, they have intelligence and courage as evident in their daily life style.





Dress and Ornaments

Their dress is very simple and not distinct from that of their neighbours like the Santal, Bathudi, Munda, etc. Male persons use hand woven coarse loin cloth (*dhoti*) which rarely reaches below the knees. The lower portion of the dhoti is tucked at the back. Now-a-days Kolha youth are using trousers, shirts etc.

Kolha women use a kind of coarse saree of about 6 feet to 8 feet long. They also use blouse and other under garments. Use of glass or silver bangles, bead, glass or silver necklace, silver anklets, rings and ear-rings, hair pins, wristlets etc. are common by women. Unlike spinsters, married women wear iron bangles (*medaskam*) and toe rings (*katapola*) for marital identity. The women prefer to decorate their hair knot with colourful flowers and traditional hairpins. Use of coloured criss-cross sarees and modern ornaments in these days is a sign of modernization.



HABITAT, SETTLEMENT & HOUSING



The Kols live in the geographical area having low undulating plateau, flat topped hills traversed by a network of ravines and rivers, reddish sandy soil with bare rocks and containing varieties of minerals. A long and hot summer, low rainfall and a cool and mild winter are the main characteristics of its climate.

Most of the 'Kol' villages are situated in the alluvial plains and valleys surrounded by mountains and forests. They lie very close to river and streams from which they get water easily. Traditionally, the villages were connected through foot tracks or fair weather kutchra roads and now most of them replaced by concrete link roads.

The Kols usually live in multi-ethnic villages amidst other tribes and castes. In few cases, they inhabit uni-ethnic villages. The settlements are constructed in tune and rhythm of nature. Generally, they have well-defined village boundaries. Big flat or vertical memorial stones of dead persons are found near the boundary line of each village. After the dead body is burnt, the charred bone remains are collected in an earthen pot and buried in a pit, the mouth of which is capped by a big flat stone. These are considered gravestones where the ancestors of the clan have been laid to rest.





At the centre of the village the dancing ground or *akhra* is located where villagers gather for meeting and recreational activities usually in the evening. At the village outskirts, especially in the eastern direction, lies the sacred grove of sal trees called 'Sarna' where *desauli* - the village deity resides.

Each Kol village is composed of 2 or 3 hamlets which are known as *tola*. The houses in the village are arranged sometimes in a linear fashion but usually sparsely distributed. The Kols generally build a single roomed house in which a partition wall separates the kitchen from the sleeping room which is comparatively is bigger than the kitchen. They keep their grain bins in a raised platform in the corner of the sleeping room. The inner side walls of the bed room are attached with a narrow verandah which is used to keep their household articles. In the kitchen room, there is an earthen seat meant for their ancestral spirits (*bura buri*) locally known as *ading*. The people of other communities are strictly prohibited to touch the *ading*. Separate sheds for cows and domesticated animals are built adjacent to the bed room. The *dhenki* or paddy husking lever is installed in one corner of the cattle shed or in a projecting wing of the house. The outer side walls of the house are surrounded by verandah.

The Kol houses have a rectangular ground plan with mud walls and their roofs are thatched with straw, grass or country tiles. The size of the house varies from 13.5 ft x 7.5 ft. to 25.5 ft x 10.5 ft. They keep their houses very neat and clean. Floors are plastered with the paste of cow dung and mud. The outer side walls are painted attractively with various floral and animal designs using various natural or mineral colours like red, yellow, white, etc. These wall paintings are the skilful fine art of their women folk.

To build a house a Kolha considers site selection as a major and important activity. For this they use a rice divination method performed by the village priest or *Dehuri* or any elder member of the lineage. Sometimes a Hindu pandit's help is sought to decide the exact location of the house before construction to have a peaceful environment and avoid the disturbance by malevolent spirits.



Women assist in building the walls and floor of the house. For a woman to get up on the roof is a taboo. When the building is complete, a ritual takes place to install the household god. The place near the hearth is marked for the purpose. A *tulsi* plant is planted somewhere in the courtyard.

Household Articles

The Kols have few household belongings. Wooden framed cots woven with thin ropes (*parkam bayar*) and mats made of wild date palm-leaves (*jati*) are used as beds. Earthen wares (*chatu*) or aluminum vessels are used for cooking and storing purposes. Other important articles like broomsticks (*jannah*), winnowing fan (*hatau*), pestle, and implements like digging stick, axe (*hakeh*), knife, plough (*nayal*), leveler (*kara*), yoke (*nangali*) and straw made grain bins (*bolah*), etc. used in their day to day economic activities are kept in the house. For the purpose of hunting they keep bow (*aa*), arrow (*sar*), spear (*burchhi*) etc. Besides hunting implements, they also have various types of fishing traps and nets to catch fish from nearby stream and rivulets. These are kept in the corners of the living room.



SOCIAL LIFE

The Kol society is divided into different totemistic, patrilineal and exogamous clans called *killi*. Each *killi* has a totem and the totemic animal, plant or material object associated with it is considered to be sacred. The *killi* is identified easily as they use their clan name as surname. Marriage within the clan is strictly tabooed. After marriage girls are initiated into their husband's clan group. A strong bond of reciprocity and co-operation exists among the clan members as they consider themselves as brothers and sisters. Some of the clans of the tribe are *Chatar, Tiria, Gagarai, Saya, Pingua, Hemrum* etc.



Kol families are monogamous, patrilineal and patrilocal. Joint families are also seen. Father is the head of the family who manages all the family affairs in consultation with the wife and grown up members. After father's death, all the properties are inherited by the sons following the rule of primogeniture. Grown-up boys and girls help their parents in domestic and outdoor works. Role of women are also very important in all domestic and economic activities.



LIFE CYCLE

Pregnancy & Child Birth:

Birth is considered as an important event in the Kols' life cycle. They welcome pregnancy and child birth after marriage to continue their lineage. So pregnant women are not considered unclean. They have no preference for the sex of the child to be born. In their society, child birth irrespective of sex of the child is believed to be the blessings of their supreme deity - Singh Bonga (Sun God).

Motherhood is much respected by the Kol. All the family members take special care of the pregnant woman. During pregnancy, a Kol woman has to follow certain taboos and prohibitions regarding her food, drink and mobility. She is prohibited to prepare 'illi', the rice bear and to go outside of the house in the evening time alone and come out of the house during solar and lunar eclipse.





The delivery of the child is assisted by a midwife of *Ghasi* caste. The mother-in-law or any experienced woman also remains present to help. After child birth the umbilical cord (*mara*) is severed with an arrow or a new blade. They apply their indigenous traditional treatment to the new born child by sprinkling ash to his/her body. It is considered to be a preventive to save the child from malevolent spirits. Luke-warm water is used to bath the new born baby after applying till oil gently on his/her body.



After the child birth, the child's father arranges a cock fight in honor of *Sing Bonga*. The family members observe pollution for 8 days. On the 9th day, purificatory ceremony (*marta*) is organized. They prepare traditional liquor known as *illi* which is offered to their ancestors for the well being of the child. All the kith and kin are invited to attend the ritual. Usually, the mother resumes her routine household activities from the 12th day. The family is treated unclean for one month. After one month a grand feast is arranged for the clan members, friends and relatives.

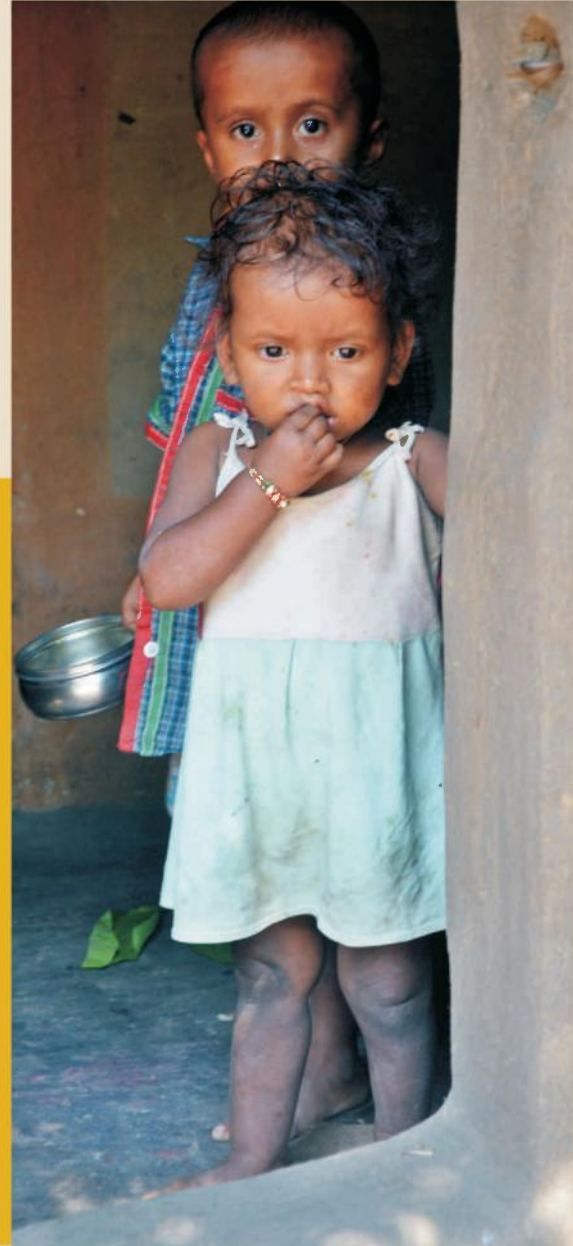




Name-Giving Ceremony (*Numutu puria*)

Name giving ceremony is conducted on the 21st or 30th day of the birth of the child. The name of the child is given by 'Dehuri' (Priest). A sun dried rice is thrown into a pot which contains purified water. Then dried rice is thrown by one by one to the water by uttering the names of their ancestors. While uttering the name of a particular ancestor if the rice touches the first rice it is believed that the same ancestor has been born and the child is given his name. Usually, the name of the first child comes from the paternal ancestors, while the name of the second child comes from maternal ancestors.

The Kols are very affectionate to their children. Early childhood socialization process is taken care of by the mother and other family members. Peer groups play an important role in the socialization process of late childhood.



Puberty

Puberty is an important landmark in the life of an adolescent girl. When the girl attains her first menarche she has to follow some taboos. She remains in seclusion in an isolated room for seven days. During that period she is tabooed to attend any ritual, to look or talk to any male persons. On the morning of the eighth day, she takes a purificatory bath anointing oil and turmeric paste and wears new clothes presented by her relatives.



Marriage

For marriage the Kols follow the rule of community endogamy and clan exogamy. Marriage is strictly prohibited outside their community and between boys and girls of the same clan who are treated as brothers and sisters. Child marriage is not practised. Monogamy and adult marriage is the rule. Polygamy is permitted under exceptional circumstances of wife's barrenness and serious

illness. With rare exceptions, their marriages tend to occur predominantly within the same generation.

Cross-cousin marriage is preferred. Marriage by negotiation (*diku andi*) is considered ideal and prestigious. However, other types of marriages like marriage by capture (*apartipi*), love marriage (*raji khusi*), marriage by service (*anadar*), marriage by

exchange of sisters (*badal andi*), marriage by intrusion (*dhuku*), marriage by trial (*sindurkarna*) take place in few cases. Like other tribes, junior *levirate* and *sororate* are also allowed in Kol society.

Marriage ceremony occupies a place of major prominence in a Kol life. Marriage by negotiation (*diku andi*) considered to be prestigious is expensive, elaborate and time taking. In this case the whole of the nuptial cycle mainly goes through four traditional phases like preliminary enquiries, ceremonial paying of bride price, wedding ceremony proper and post nuptial ceremony. To be specific, they mainly follow four traditions in

this regard. Firstly, the groom's side has to pay bride price (*ganansid*) to the bride's parents. Secondly, the groom puts vermilion on the forehead of the bride. Thirdly, after marriage the newly married couple should attend the ritual known as *jamsing* to appease their ancestors which is held in groom's house. At last, a feast is hosted by both groom's side and bride's side respectively to the kith and kin to get social approval.





Preliminary arrangements for this marriage are made by two mediators, one from the bride's side known as *liu* and another from the groom's side known as *dutam karji*. First of all, the groom's parents visit the bride's home with rice bear (*ili*) to put forth the marriage proposal. If the proposal is accepted a date is fixed by them for negotiation. In this kind of marriage the custom of bride price (*ganansid*) is prevalent. The groom's party has to pay one cow or calf, one goat or fowl and one hundred rupees as bride price to the bride's parents.

On the wedding day, the groom with his parents and relatives reach at the bride's house in a procession. The *dehuri* (priest) conducts the wedding rites in the name of *sing bonga* by uttering rhymes for the well being of the couple. After that the groom moves around the bride for seven times by holding a knife and at last puts vermilion mark on the bride's forehead with a silver coin. It signifies that he will protect that girl from all crises. Bride's sister ties the clothes of bride and bridegroom together. After this they revolve around the *pendal* seven times by invoking their supreme deity *Sing Bonga* and other gods and goddesses. The bride's party hosts a feast for the kith and kin. Drinking and dancing is an inseparable part of the ceremony.

The next day the bride is led to the groom's house. The mother-in-law of the bride welcomes the newly married couple. Then the bride enters into the kitchen and seeks the blessings from *ading* (ancestors). This practice is called as *jamsing*. The groom's family also hosts a marriage feast to all kinsfolk, guests, and relatives. The norm of dwelling after marriage is patri-local.

Divorce

In Kol society divorce (*bagi*) is permitted. Either party can divorce his/her spouse on certain grounds. The wife can claim divorce on the grounds of maladjustment in conjugal life, impotency, cruelty, extra-marital relationship, alcoholism, poor maintenance etc. Likewise, the husband can divorce the wife on the grounds of barrenness, laziness and extra-marital relationship. The divorce cases are adjudicated by the husband's traditional village council. Also the village chief of the bride's village and her relatives are invited to attend the meeting. If divorce is sanctioned for husband's fault, he has to pay back the bride price to the bride's side but if the wife is at fault he has to return half of the bride price. But if the wife divorces the husband from her side without any fault of the husband, there will be no repayment of bride price. Children of a divorced couple are the sole liability of their father.

After the divorce is socially sanctioned both the man and woman are free to remarry because Kol society permits remarriage of widows, widowers and divorcees.



Death

The Kolhas believe that death is inevitable. The corpses are cremated and buried depending upon the nature of death. But burial is more common than cremation. In cases of unnatural deaths due to snake bite, suicide, small pox, drowning in water or the attack of the wild animals etc, the corpses are buried but those of persons of natural death are burnt. As an exception, in the Kol society the women participate in carrying the corpse to the cremation or burial ground. The wife, daughter or unmarried sister sets fire to the corpse. On the next day charred bones are collected from the cremation ground and are kept hanging in a pot from the roof in a corner of the sleeping room.

The mortuary pollution period is observed by all the lineage members for 21 days. The purificatory rite (*kamini*) is observed on the 21st day. The kith and kin are invited. All the clan members cut their hair, pair their nails and take a purificatory bath. To appease the ancestors, magico-religious rites are performed by the *dehuri* (priest) who digs a pit in the graveyard and burys the bones of the deceased kept in the sleeping room. Feasting and drinking are the major activities in this ritual. They also call upon the spirit of the deceased to take shelter in adding- the seat of their ancestors in the kitchen. In all festive occasions the ancestors are worshipped for their well being.

ECONOMIC LIFE



The Kols are settled cultivators and agriculture is the main-stay of their economy. Besides, they depend on seasonal food gathering and forest collections, hunting, fishing and wage earning to supplement their livelihood. To earn wages, they also work as labourers in agriculture and local mining and industries. Some educated persons are employed in different private, government, mining and industrial sectors.

The Kolha have three categories of lands i.e. paddy land, orchard land and homestead land. Low land or wet land is termed as 'Beda' where they grow paddy. Up and dry land is termed as 'Dhipa' or 'Guda'. They grow vegetables, black gram (*raba*), red gram (*rahi*), *koda*, mustard, *gundlu*, *tisi*, ruma, jamy, jada etc in dhipa lands. In their kitchen garden (*badi*) situated very close to their house, they grow brinjal (*bengay*), tomato (*biliti*), green leaves (*aya*), beans (*smili*), papaya (*bindi dura*), pumpkin (*kakaru*), pea (*simbali*), onion (*piaja*), chili (*malchi*), green leaves (*aa*) etc. Cow dung is used as manure.



Agricultural operations mainly start by the onset of southwest monsoon. Works like ploughing and watching of crops are done only by men and other activities like cutting bushes, seeding, manuring, weeding, reaping etc. are done by both men and women. They organize most of their economic activities on the basis of mutual help and co-operation. During transplantation, harvest and transport of crops from field, communal labour is sought for.

In their seasonal forest collections, they generally collect fire woods (*sanance*), sal leaves (*sarajam shakam*), bamboo (*maun*), resin (*jhuna*), wild potato (*buru sanga*), mushrooms (*uduh*), green leaves (*aah*) mango (*uli*), blackberry (*kudaso*), date (*khajurijo*), sweet potato (*rauvasanga*) etc from the jungle. Some of these items like wild potato, mushroom

are used only for consumption. Other items like sal leaves (*sarajama sakam*), resin (*jhuna*), bamboo (*maun*) etc are sold in the local market to earn money after meeting their household consumption needs. The Kolha women take up this activity which provides them supplementary livelihood.

Being settled agriculturists, the Kols have great fascination for domestications of animals. Usually they domesticate cows, bullocks, goats, sheep and poultry. The cows and bullocks are used for agricultural purposes. However, they do not consume cow's milk. Chicken and goats are domesticated not only for consumption but also to be sacrificed before the deities on different rituals and festive occasions as well as for entertaining guests and relatives. Most importantly, in their culture the cocks are reared for the most popular local sport of "cock fight".



In the past, hunting was one of their major economic activities. Since childhood, they observe the parents or seniors while hunting in the forest and gradually by imitation and regular participation, they learn the techniques of hunting. Like communal labour they practice communal hunting. It reflects their social unity. They go for hunting after "Akshya Trutiya" festival. At present due to denudation of forest and imposition of forest laws, hunting has been totally banned for conservation of forests and the wild life. Yet, fishing has been continuing as an occasional economic pursuit. They catch fish in the nearby streams and rivulets.



Food Habits

The Kolhas are non-vegetarians. Rice (*mandi*) is their staple food. In the morning, they prefer to eat watered rice (*daa mandi*) with fried green leaves, green chilies and salt. For lunch and dinner, they usually take boiled rice (*raa-mandi*) with fried green leaves (*aa*), vegetable curry, garlic, onion, chillies, salt and *kachada* oil extracted from *mahua* seeds, etc. They also take pulses like *urad*, *kulthi* and *biri*. Til and *mahua* oil are their favorite oils. They eat seasonal fruits like mango, jackfruit, guava etc.



They are fond of eating non-vegetarian items like the curry of fish (*haku*), red ant (*hau*) and termites (*nidri*), crabs (*kattah*), meat (*jilu*) of different types of birds and animals when ever available. During rituals and festive occasions, they prepare curry of meat (*jilu*), different types of rice cakes and take these along with boiled rice and country liquor. In the past, they were consuming beef and pork but now coming in contact with the Hindu neighbors, they are avoiding such foods.

Like other tribes, the Kols are also very fond of intoxicating traditional drinks such as rice bear (*handia*), date palm juice (*tadi*) and *mahua* liquor (*matkamjli rasi*). Such traditional liquors are offered to their ancestors and deities on different festive occasions to appease them. Tobacco leaves (*sukul*) are chewed raw or puffed through handmade cigar (*pica*) by almost all adult members. There is no gender discrimination in smoking or drinking of liquor.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES



The Kols are polytheists. Being the worshiper of nature, they say that they are the followers of *sarna* religion. The word *sarna* is derived from the word *sir* which means 'arrow'. The *sarna* religion is also professed by many tribes of north Odisha namely, Santal, Oraon, Birhor and Munda etc.

'*Bonga*' is the generic term which is used to signify all gods / goddesses and spirits. Their supreme deity is *Sing bonga* or Sun God. He is a very benevolent God who is also called "*Dharam Debta*". They believe that he is the Creator of the Universe. They also worship *Marangburu* or *Baru bonga* - the goddess of hill for the arrival of rains. There are other deities like *Basuki Thakurani* - the Earth Goddess, *Paudi turudu bonga* -the god of deep water, *Bagiya bonga* -the god of forest who controls all the wild animals, *Ikir bonga* -the deity of river, *Sangar bonga* -the god of hunting, *Sana turudu bonga* -the god of wealth, *Karam Bonga* (*Laxmi Thakurani*) - the goddess of wealth and prosperity. In addition to that they have *Jid bonga*, *Kumuba bonga*, *Bhata bonga*, *Hankar bonga*, etc. All these deities are worshipped by the Kols in different festive occasions and also at the time of crises.

At the village outskirts, lies their sacred grove of sal trees (*sarna*) where their village deity *Desauli* resides. *Desauli* protects all the villagers from different crises. Therefore, most of the community rituals are performed at *sarna* in the honor of the village deity. *Gramsiri* is another important village deity worshipped by the Kols.

They have the 'cult of ancestor worship'. In every Kol house, in the kitchen room, there is an earthen seat called *ading* for their ancestral spirits (*bura buri*). The people of other communities are strictly prohibited to touch the *ading*. In all festive, ritual and ceremonial occasions, the ancestors are worshipped there by offering food, flowers and incense to get their blessings.

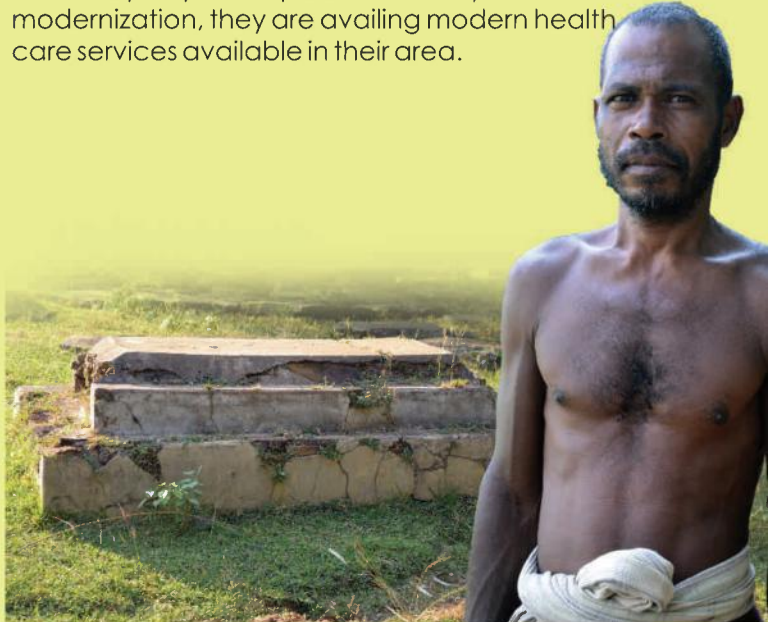
The Kols strongly believe in deities and spirits and their relationship with supernaturalism are founded on respectful fear, dependence, self surrender and propitiation. Their spiritual union with these spirits is supposed to be accomplished concretely through supplications, rice beer offerings and animal sacrifices.

The Kols like other *Kolarian* tribes have a strong belief in witchcraft and evil spirits of which they are mortally afraid of. The evil spirits are called *Churel*, *Panawa*, *Jind* and *Matia*. They believe that prolongation of any kind of disease is due to the action of *Dian* (witch) or evil *bonga*. Generally, the *Dians* are elderly Kol women. Irrespective of age, one can learn the *dian* *bidya* (the art of witch craft). Sometimes, the *Dians* are believed to have intercourse with malevolent spirits to acquire the evil power to bring natural calamities to their region or to harm or kill their enemies.

The sacerdotal head of the Kol village is called *Dehuri/Deuri* who mediates between *Hor* (man) and *Bonga* (god). He officiates as a priest in all the village, community and family level rituals. His post is hereditary. The Kols seek his priestly services to please and propitiate their *bongas* for relief from sickness, crop harvesting, rearing of healthy livestock and getting good progeny. Sometimes, he is assisted by *Jamsim*.



For magico-religious remedy for sickness the Kols seek the services of their traditional healer, the *Ojha* or *Denova* (*shaman*). In trance he can detect the cause of illness and prescribes remedies to the patient by performing magico-religious rites. There is another traditional healer called *Raulia* who acts as the medicine man. In these days, by the impact of development and modernization, they are availing modern health care services available in their area.



DANCE AND MUSIC

Celebrations and festivities are integrally woven in to the basics of tribal life. Undoubtedly, the Kols are fond of dance inseparably interwoven with songs and music. They compose their own music and folk-songs. Folk songs are sung on almost all occasions but the themes are occupational or connected with festival and season change. They have a wealth of folk dances and songs, folk lore and folk tales closely mingled with their life-blood which throw light on their origin and evolution.

Like all other tribes, dance (*susun*) and music are the integral part of all the festivals and rituals observed by the Kol community. Besides, in their leisure time they perform various dances for entertainment. In their society dance is a group event. There is a great similarity in the music, songs and dances of the Kols with the neighbouring tribes like the Munda, the Santal, Kharia and the Birhor etc.

The principal varieties of dances they perform are *maghe susun* on the occasion of *Maghe* festival, *ba susun* in *Ba* festival, *andi susun* on the occasion of marriage and *hero susun* during the *Hero* festival. Each dance is accompanied by a song, which is sung by the performers. Irrespective of age and sex all can dance and invariably sing but the accompanying music is provided by the male members only. For dance and music they use different types of musical instruments like *dama* (single membrane drum), *dumang* (double membrane drum), *rutu* (flute), *banam* (one stringed fiddle), *chadchadi* (single membrane drum), *ghanta* (iron bell) etc.

The rich tradition of dance and music has been developed indigenously and maintained by themselves without any external help. Now-a-days, with the help of the government and non-governmental agencies they stage their dance and music in different district, state and national level festivals to exhibit their artistic talents and cultural identity.



SOCIAL CONTROL

The Kol village is regarded as an important social unit. The families of different clans in the village extend mutual help and co-operation to each other in different socio-religious and economic activities. The villagers share each other's sorrows and happiness at the time of need. Kol society maintains a unique system of customary rules and regulations for the management of their customary affairs at the tribal, inter-tribal, village and clan levels.

Traditionally, they had a well-organized autonomous socio-political system. Their traditional governance system was a three-tier system such as village council at the bottom, regional council in the middle and tribal council at the top. All the household heads are the member of the traditional village council headed by the secular village headman known as Munda or Pradhan who is selected by the family heads of the village. He is assisted by an assistant called Dakua. Munda is the adjudicator of all cases in the village council. Dakua acts as the messenger. He conveys the messages regarding date and time of the council's meetings to its members.

At the regional level the confederation of some contiguous Kol villages is called *pirh*. The head of the *pirh* is called as Manki or Sardar who is nominated by the Mundas of the component villages. He presides over the *pirh* meetings where inter village disputes are resolved. Several *pirhs* constitute the apex tribal organization called *pala*. Bisoi is the secular head of *pala* nominated by the *Mankis* of the constituent *pirhs*. Their customary matters which could not be resolved at the regional level and so referred to this apex body are discussed and finalized at this level.

In these days with the introduction of new panchayatiraj institution, the traditional socio-political scenario has changed. Only the traditional village council is still effective. The traditional middle and upper level councils have lost their importance. Even now, the Munda handles their customary village affairs and settles all the disputes regarding theft, conflicts, violation of customary rules, witchcraft and sorcery, partition of property, sale and mortgage of land, marriage, bride price, divorce, adultery and the like. Munda presides over the village council meeting, initiates discussions and take decisions in consultation with Dakua and other village elders.

Punishment given to the offenders also varies according to the gravity of the offence. Generally, the offender is asked to pay the penalty in shape of kinds or cash. Sometimes, the culprit is ex-communicated if found guilty of serious violations of customary rules.



CHANGING WORLD

With the dawn of independence, the wind of change is blowing in the interior tribal pockets as well. The Kols are now passing through a phase of transition which is reflected in their changing life style and cultural pattern. Special developmental plans and programmes, lunched by Government and non-government agencies for their socio-economic upliftment have contributed a lot in their transformation.

With the development of science and infrastructure, industrialization exerts profound impact on the various aspects of Kol society. With the spread of education, Kol young people have entered into the field of industrial economy and job market. With the change of political system the traditional roles of the functionaries have also changed.

In recent decades the Ho society is undergoing rapid change. The scenes of change in the Kol habitations can be traced in the growing welfare institutions like Government Residential Schools, Colleges, Anganwadi Centers, Public Health Centres, Veterinary Hospitals, Police Posts and Industrial Establishments etc. We also find all weather roads, tube wells, IAY houses, fire proof houses, electrified villages and irrigated green fields in the Munda settlement area. Even supply of HYV seeds, introduction of multiple cropping, input assistance, market assurance, banking linkages etc have strengthened their foothold in agriculture.



MGNREGA programme also plays a vital role in upholding their economy. Blooming execution of various individual benefit schemes and Bankable Income Generating Schemes for women Self Help Groups (SHGs) by the Government illustrate the positive angle of their development. Under various socio-economic development schemes, SHGs have been formed and they have got the opportunity to avail different kinds of financial benefits to improve their living standards by adopting gainful pursuits like fishery, poultry, horticulture, etc. By developing cottage industry they also prepare broomsticks, pickles, leaf plates and turmeric powder and sell these in the local market to earn additional income.

Due to introduction of the reservation policy, PESA, (Panchayatraj Extension to the Scheduled Areas Act) and Forest Rights (FR) Act in their area, their traditional rights to self-governance, development and exploitation of forest resources have been recognized and these have contributed to their empowerment. Several other protective and promotional measures provided by the constitution and subsequent legislations accompanied by a host of welfare and development plans and programmes have helped them towards their integration in the national mainstream in a footing of equality



Organization of Live Demonstration Programmes of Arts and Craft of different tribes, Tribal Dance Festivals and Adivasi Mela by the Government and especially by SCSTRTI from time to time undoubtedly provides a polite platform for the tribals to bloom and flourish in their own way. Live Demonstrations Programmes are being organized in the premises of Tribal Museum of SCSTRTI where their arts and artifacts have been preserved and exhibited for the domestic and foreign visitors, there by opening a window to their unique cultural landmarks. Every year National Tribal Dance Festival in December and Annual State Level Tribal Fair (Adivasi Mela) are being organized at the State capital of Bhubaneswar to exhibit the colourful and diversified arts, crafts, musics, songs, dances and other non-material and material aspects of the tribal world of Odisha in which the Kol artists and artisans are participating.

However, while facing the powerful waves of modernization and development, the Kols are struggling hard to preserve the time-tested indigenous elements of their pristine culture as well as their cultural identity against letting them to be lost in antiquity. Still their silent but solid grip on their core of the culture continues unabated.






Photo Handbook on
Tribes of Odisha,
Series 47, Kolha
@SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

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Website : scstrti.in, Email-scstrti@yahoo.co.in,

Telephone : 0674-2563649/251635

ISBN : 978-93-80705-56-9

Photography : **Suman Vision, Bhubaneswar**
Layout, Design & Printing : **Capital Business
Service & Consultancy, Bhubaneswar**